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HINDU WOMEN



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HINDU WOMEN.

"Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this,
To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction."

"He anointed Me to preach good tidings to the poor: He hath
sent Me to proclaim release to the captives, to set at liberty them
that are bruised."

HINDU WOMEN:

WITH

*GLIMPSES INTO THEIR LIFE AND
ZENANAS.*

By H. LL.

EDITORIAL SECRETARY, CHURCH OF ENGLAND ZENANA
MISSIONARY SOCIETY.



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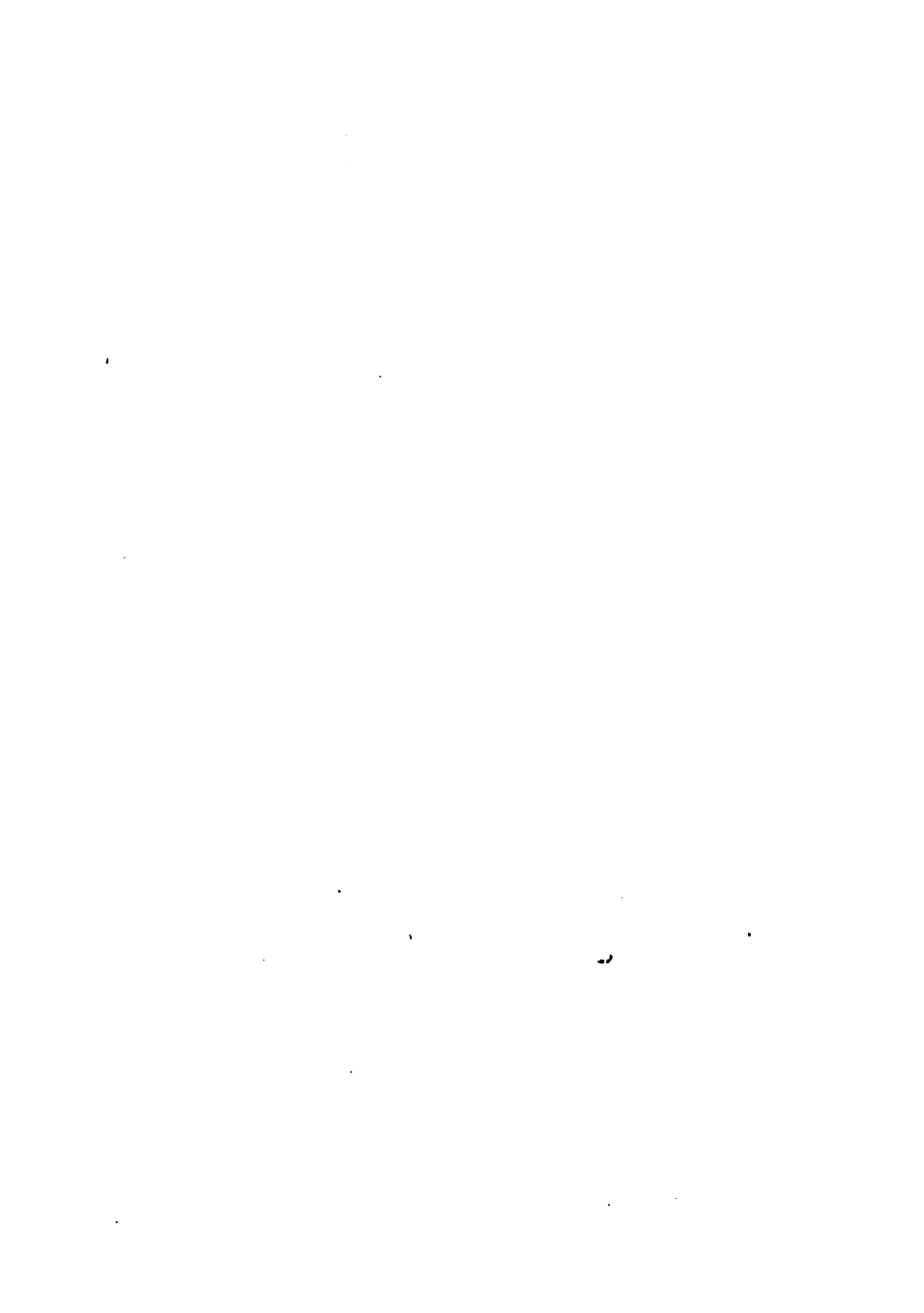
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HINDU WOMEN.



CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION.

“A land of darkness, as darkness itself ; and of the shadow of death, without any order, and where the light is as darkness.”—JOB x. 22.



WHENEVER the history of the Christian Church in India comes to be written, some chapters will have to be devoted specially to the very peculiar position which women occupied in the country when the truth was first introduced there.

The Jewish women, whose lives had been kept from sinking into the darkness and shame that gradually crept over all heathen women, were amongst the first to welcome the Saviour; and He who condescended to be “born of a woman” called not a few of His countrywomen according to the flesh to share in the first joys of discipleship, and

to minister to Him in loving obedience and much faith.

Even in the heathen countries, of the early Anno Domini years, where Satan had already shown his malignity by degrading womanhood into the toy and slave of man—in Rome, and Greece, and heathen Europe—they were still free to hear the preached Word; and some, many indeed, such as Lydia whose heart the Lord opened, and “honourable women not a few,” were amongst the first recipients of the “glad tidings,” and lived to spread that doctrine which had saved them “out of darkness,” and had given them grace to become the servants and daughters of the Lord God Almighty.

But it was reserved for India to demonstrate all that Satan could do to degrade the daughters of that Eve whom he first led into disobedience and sin; and for modern Hinduism to concentrate upon them the evils of heathenism grown old in vice, the degradation of untrusted slaves, and the miseries of close imprisonment, ignorance, and idleness combined. This position of the women has been one of the greatest obstacles to the spread of the Gospel of Jesus Christ in India. They have revenged their wrongs by becoming the barriers between their country and freedom; they have kept the iron chain of custom and superstition firmly riveted; and their wrongs have, as is always the case, reacted

in righteous judgment. The men who have so degraded them have become by them degraded; and a Hindu mother or wife will resist, even to death, her son or her husband following the convictions of an awakened mind and conscience, and casting aside the abominable idolatry in which he has been reared to become a follower of the meek and holy Jesus.

But a Church without women is, thank God, an impossibility. It is the devil's religions which thrust women out of their systems, whilst the Church of the living God recognises that it is the mothers everywhere who do the first nursing and nurturing for the Lord.

Therefore, to understand rightly what we have to do for India, we must with care consider this central evil and peculiarity in the land—the wrongs of its womanhood, and how they have been brought about.

When the missionary spirit of England began to consider its duties in India, it found that vast country over which God had permitted us to take rule, dominated by an idolatrous heathenism so systematic, so oppressive, and so degrading, as to render any hope of its overthrow almost beyond hope.

The religion of which we thus speak is Hinduism; for though it is quite true that there are many other religions in India followed by numbers of its people and tribes, such as Mahomedanism and Sikhism in the North, Parseeism in the West, Fetishism and

devil-worship amongst the hill-tribes, and even an old but enfeebled Christianity (the Syrian Christians) in the South, yet each one of these is encircled, overshadowed, and, to a very great degree, subordinated and altered by the overwhelming and preponderating rule of Hinduism.

What, then, is this Hinduism? Let our readers carefully observe that we say, what is this system?—for it is utterly beyond our power or our purpose to describe its philosophy, its hidden meanings, its history, or its traditions; all we have to do is to try truthfully to describe what Christianity met when it braced itself to the glorious task of winning India for Christ. Surely Satan's very throne of power was here; and power in almost any form—power either for good or evil—is the central thought of Hinduism. If any god or man claims or demonstrates the power of doing superhuman evil, then he is to be worshipped; and so the 333 millions of gods in the Hindu pantheon are for the most part incarnations of evil deeds, evil thoughts, and unspeakable wickedness. Krishna, one of these incarnations whose very name means black, is, writes a modern author,* “the most popular god in India. Images of him are more frequent than of any other. These are generally attempts to represent him performing some of his feats; but there are also many

* Robson's *Hinduism in its Relations to Christianity*.

adaptations of other images that had become celebrated in certain districts. The best known of these is that of Juggernath in Orissa ; it is a shapeless, hideous idol, nothing but a black stump with a head upon it. It was probably an old idol revered in that part of the country, and when the worship of Krishna spread, it was adopted as one of his names (Lord of the World) and one of his representations, the difference between it and the others being accounted for by saying that his limbs had dropped off on account of his immorality ! . . . This to us sounds like disgusting blasphemy, but it shows what pantheism has done for Hinduism. The pundits allegorise, the common people gloat over, the plain narrative. Nothing is more marked than the different ways in which the best educated pundits and the common people meet an attack as to the character of their god. The former fence, explain away, spiritualise all the indecent stories, till they say they derive edification from them. The latter answer plainly, ' He had power, why should he not use it to please himself in any way he chose ? ' "

Judge then of the horror with which a Christian missionary hears the words, " Your Christ is our Krishna, it is all the same ; we worship as our forefathers did, and you worship as you have been taught : why should we change ? "

We venture on this one illustration only, of all the

abominations of Hindu idolatry let it suffice ; but let not the reader forget that the Hindu reckons such objects of worship by millions, and that further by the degrading influence of their gross imaginings about God, and that they can by charm or invocation bring the Divinity into anything they please ; they have fallen from image worship to stone adoration, and mere rocks or stones or sticks become gods by the application of a daub of red paint, and are worshipped and then thrown aside. Not unfrequently have our Zenana missionaries been given a stone from a heap outside as one of the gods to whom puja has been paid, but who has now been cast out of the puja house to make room for another !

It is difficult for the Christian to fathom the state of mind of that worshipper who, for example, worships one day with all honours the image of some special god, and then next day strings it up to the ceiling of his house, to be neglected and forgotten till next year's fête-day comes round ; or, worse still, of that one who worships his block of wood or stone, and then, because he gets no answer to his prayers, beats his idol and even destroys it altogether. The priests will sometimes bring out their god loaded with chains and show him to the people, saying he is in debt, and until the money is paid he cannot be released, &c. ! What does Satan mean by it all ? *Such child's play* seems a hopeless barrier against

the truth, and the temptation is strong to refrain from preaching Jesus to such people lest it should be "casting our pearls before swine."

But here, if it is possible, it will be well to explain a Hindu's first idea of God. It is, a pundit would say, "The Spirit or Self," "The Supreme Spirit;" He alone *is*, everything else is not; and this impersonal Spirit pervades everything, so that, in this sense, everything is God. Oh, the terribleness of Satan's lies! This mystery of iniquity presents so many aspects, that to confront and confound them all seems an impossibility.

Then, again, the Hindu believes that the human spirit is a part of the Divine Spirit—not indeed, as we are taught by the Scriptures, that God breathed into man the breath of life and man became a living spirit, but in the other sense, that man and God are one!

The writer remembers with what a thrill of horror the words of Keshub Chunder Sen were heard. In one of his famous English speeches he had been describing his ideas of the Christian sects in England, and pretending that each one presented a different Christ to be believed in and worshipped, and then in a loud offensive voice he exclaimed, "Away with your Christs! I will have none of them. My Christ is around me, within me, in the air I breathe, *in the sights I see*, in the heaven above and in the

earth beneath. My Christ is here ; I am my own Christ ! ”

The terrible presumption and blasphemy was only explained by a missionary friend pointing out that it was a part of Keshub's old belief that man and God are one, and that he and his old Hindu friends would have met exactly and without contradiction if, instead of this new formula, “I am my own Christ,” he had given utterance to their old one, “I am God.” Is it any wonder that this last of Hindu reformers, whose career has been watched with such hopefulness by Christians of all shades of thought, and who at first seemed so steadfastly and eagerly to turn his face towards the light, should have disappointed all, and in the pride of this unsubdued thought in his heart, “I am my own Christ,” “I am God,” have fallen back into all the wiles of the devil and allowed himself to be worshipped? And this after beginning his “Somaj” by abolishing for his followers image worship and, as he said, all idolatry? Doubtless, too, he will be worshipped ; adding another to the 333 millions of gods whose evil memories overshadow India, making it in very truth “the land of darkness.”

But is this all the religion of the Hindus? No indeed! There is the fearful, inexorable delusion of “Fate,” like the toils of some deadly web enveloping every circumstance, releasing from all responsibility, and excusing from every sin.

The first religious performance in a Hindu child's life is to have its horoscope made out by the Brahmin priests. And this "Karma," this fate, what is it? Is it the hap-hazard prediction of what may possibly happen in one life? No, nothing of the kind. It is the pretended revelation of the amount of punishment or reward that *must* fall to the lot in this birth of this part of the spirit of Self, which has, after countless births, got thus far on its wearisome journey, in union with matter, through the eighty-four hundred thousand appointed births it has to accomplish!

It is almost impossible to explain what effect this fearful belief has on the Hindu mind. "It is my fate," when the worst of sorrows fall; "It is my fate," when the wickedest crime is perpetrated, is the universal cry. And yet it is the impersonal "fate," not the present individual Me, that has anything at all in connection with the affair. Thus sorrow and joy are alike brought in as parts of the great whole of some curious thought of the expiation of sin. But of the how or why or when this terrible transmigration began, there is no explanation. One vague hope there is, indeed, that some time it will cease, and the full atonement being made of the deeds done in the body, then the spirit will be freed from its bondage of matter and *again* absorbed in the Supreme. This the

Hindu calls "Liberation." "The resurrection of the body and the life everlasting" is no hope of his. Does not every Christian mind long to reveal the Great Atonement, the one way of salvation through Jesus Christ the Lord?

An author* before quoted gives the following as an illustration of this fearful "Karma":—

"A pundit with whom I had once occasion to discuss the subject used the following illustration: 'We are bound to our existence,' he said, 'by two chains, the one a golden chain and the other an iron chain. The golden chain is virtue, and the iron chain is vice. We perform virtuous actions, and we must exist in order to receive their reward; we perform vicious actions, and we must exist in order to receive their punishment. The golden chain is pleasanter than the iron one, but both are fetters, and from both should we seek to free our spirit.' This comparison is a good illustration both of the principles and of the spirit of Hinduism. All action, whether good or bad, binds us, and there is an aim to be sought beyond happiness. If a man of low rank discharges his duty aright, he may in his next birth be a king. If a king rules well, and especially uses his power in the promotion of religion, he may in his next state be born in heaven, and spend thousands of ages there.

* Robson.

That might be a state to be desired if there were any certainty of its permanence, but in it he may at any moment commit a slip, or he may unconsciously in a previous birth have been guilty of a sin still unexpiated, which will require his being born again in the form of a demon, an animal, or one of the lower castes. There is no security of rest till the spirit is delivered from the idea of its own personality."

And as we are specially writing to explain the position of our Hindu sisters, let it be duly impressed on the reader's mind here that a girl-child's birth is accounted for by this idea of a double sin and a double disgrace. The child's father is receiving the "fate" of some ill done in a previous birth—or the gods would have given him a son. The child's spirit is entering on a term of retribution! The shadow of a double curse is thus projected over a Hindu woman's life from its first moment till its close. Who amongst all earth's sorrowing ones can more urgently claim the pity of that Lord who came "to unloose the heavy burdens, and let the oppressed go free"?

Miss Smith, of the Church of England Zenana Missionary Society at Amritsur, writes: "I was particularly struck one day, in one of the schools, when talking on the subject of death, at the eager *way in which the Hindu teacher reiterated over*

and over again, 'You are quite *sure* we shall only die once?' as though such a weight would be lifted off her mind if she could be certain that she would not pass into some animal, to live and die again when this life is done."

But there is another feature in Hinduism that must be noticed. It is Caste. As the doctrine of the Transmigration of the Soul has been likened to a poisonous web enfolding and preventing every healthy spiritual growth, so Caste is like an iron chain, fettering in cruellest bondage every sense of individual life, and making the man only a drop in the ocean of existence, or an atom in the machinery of the great whole of mundane matters.

A brief idea of Hindu Caste is this: Brahm, the great father, produced the four great caste divisions. From his head came the Brahmins who arrogate to themselves the position of gods upon earth; they may be priests or soldiers, beggars or pundits, but they are first of all Brahmins, and lords over their fellows in a very special and peculiar way.*

Doubtless we have all seen or heard of the prostrations of the richest and even the best educated of Hindu Babus before some Brahmin beggar accidentally met in the streets of Calcutta

* A Brahmin whether learned or unlearned is a mighty divinity, just as fire is a mighty divinity whether consecrated or unconsecrated.—*Manu Book*, ix. 317.

or Benares. But the astonishment that seizes on the European beholder is by no means shared by the "divine man." He is as devout a believer in himself as his most abject worshipper, and deigns no look of recognition at the devotee at his feet, but, with head erect, passes on sublimely unmoved.

* "The whole duty of a Brahmin consists in the preservation of his caste, and for this important end the public, by tacit consent, relieve him from every other obligation.

"What is your occupation?' I asked of one the other day, when visiting at his house. 'Madam! I am a beggar!' was the reply, delivered with the air of a prince. He lives on public charity, but with him the beggar's is the most honourable of all professions." And still we hear from time to time of the "devout" craving permission to wash the feet of the holy father, and then—oh, horror of horrors!—drinking the water.

From Brahm's shoulders and arms he is said to have brought forth the Kshatriyas, or warriors; from his thigh the Vaisyas, merchants and agriculturists; and from his foot the Sudras. But for all practical purposes Hindu society may now be considered as divided into two great castes—the Brahmins or twice-born, considered as gods; and the once-born, the great mass of the people, who worship them.

* "India, as I found it."

A very clear practical illustration of the "headship" of the Brahmins may be seen in the arrangement of government matters in some of the Native States. The Maharajahs are necessarily of the Kshatriyas, or soldier caste; but the prime minister, or, as he is generally called, the Dewan, is a Brahmin. Further explanation is unnecessary.

It has been said there is no nationality or patriotism in India—caste has eaten it all up; and this is true. These four great castes of which we have spoken have one and all become divided and subdivided into a legion of fractions, and each fraction conserves within itself its whole idea of brotherhood or union. Thus there are many subdivisions of even the Brahmins, like sub-tribes within a tribe, and these may not eat or drink with one another, may not associate with any outside their own people, may not intermarry into any other caste; and why not? It is pollution and a sin, and must be atoned for by another and another of those endless births. This same tyranny holds good throughout every subdivision of every caste, and they are endless; thus breaking up Hindu society into fragments and making "my caste" mean everything that religion or language or country would mean to others—to English or French, to Protestants or Roman Catholics, to mother-tongues or fatherlands everywhere else, all over the wide, wide world. Every petty as

well as every important action of a Hindu must be regulated by caste customs, and it is quite true that sin and immoralities are not the crimes against which caste fulminates its laws; and many a Hindu will sin openly against his conscience because that sin is within his caste rules, whilst he will draw aside his garment and hasten to bathe, he will break his water-pot or even throw away his meal untouched, lest the shadow of a low caste or a Christian should pollute him and sin against his caste.

Indeed, the only good that can be said of caste at all is that sometimes it has forbidden certain wrongs to certain castes, and where it has forbidden, the restraint is pretty scrupulously adhered to. Alas! that the restraints are so few, the licenses so many, the absurdities so great, the evils so tyrannical and rampant.

The Rev. J. Vaughan* writes: "On a review of this whole subject certain convictions force themselves upon us. The first, that caste is a thing positively unique; there is nothing in any country with whose history we are familiar, ancient or modern, with which it can be compared: it has a social element, but it is not a social distinction; it has a religious element, but it is hardly a religious institution; it finds a sanction in a religious idea,

* In "The Trident, the Crescent, and the Cross."

inasmuch as Brahma is said to have been its author, but it lives on irrespective of religious faith or observance.

“Another impression must have struck the reader, that such an institution must necessarily constitute a formidable drawback to those who are trammelled by it. It operates as a deterrent to progress of every kind; it dissipates all aspirations to rise in the lower ranks of society, and fosters a spirit of selfish arrogance in the upper; it destroys mutual sympathy and renders impossible a healthy combination of classes for the common weal. . . . And of all the obstacles to the evangelisation of India, this is by far the most formidable. The subtlety of the pundits, the philosophy of the sages, the hereditary attachment of the people to their ancient creed, though real and serious difficulties, are trifling compared with this terrible obstruction: all these may be overborne; these, as the outworks, may be effectually stormed and carried; but the dread form of caste, like an all but invulnerable barrier, rises to the view, and arrests the tide of conquest. The judgment may be convinced, the heart impressed, but the fearful consequences of decision stare the individual in the face, and no wonder that he falters. The higher his caste the heavier the cross which threatens him. To be loathed by all who once loved him, to be mourned for as *dead* by her who

bore him, to have the finger of scorn pointed at him by all his associates, to be doomed for life to social ostracism as a polluted thing, is the penalty of conversion which caste inflicts; truly the marvel is *not* that so *few*, but that so *many*, have had strength and courage to avow their convictions at such a cost."

With the testimony of a Hindu * himself we close this brief sketch of caste and its multitudinous evils. He writes: "Our complaint is against the tyranny of caste. Does a Brahmin wish to marry his daughter at a mature and properly marriageable age? Then comes the tyrant Caste and says, 'You shall not keep your daughter unmarried beyond the age of eight or ten, unless you choose to incur the penalty of excommunication.' Does a man wish to countenance, either by deed or word, the marriage of little girls plunged into life-long misery and degrading widowhood? Caste says, 'No, you will be excommunicated.' Does a Brahmin wish to dine with a man of another caste? However thick friends they may be, Caste says, 'No, you must not do that, or you will be excommunicated.' Does a man wish to dispense with any of the unmeaning idolatrous ceremonies with which native society is hampered? Caste says, 'No, or you will be excommunicated.' Does a man wish to dispense with silk

* Editor of the "Indu Prakash."

cloth and wear ordinary clothes at the time of meals? Caste says, 'No, or you will be excommunicated.' If a Brahmin feels thirsty, and has no other water but such as is brought by a Sudra near him, he cannot drink it, for caste forbids it on pain of excommunication. Why, the tyranny of caste extends from the most trifling to the most important affairs of Hindu life. It cripples the independent action of individuals, sows the seed of bitter discord between the different sections of society, encourages the most abominable practices, and dries up all the springs of that social, moral, and intellectual freedom which alone can secure greatness, whether to individuals or to nations. It has pampered the pride and insolence of the Brahmins by teaching them to look upon themselves, notwithstanding all their weaknesses, as the favourites of gods; nay, the very gods on earth who are to keep the lower orders in a state of utter degradation and illiterate servitude. Such is our caste system, so unjustifiable in principle, so unfair in organisation, and so baneful in its consequences to the highest interests of the country."

And Mr. Vaughan adds: "Strange protest from the pen of a Hindu! but this is only the articulate breathing of a growing repugnance felt by the educated classes towards such an unnatural and monstrous system: multitudes who lack courage thus to denounce the evil, do in their heart of hearts *long for its overthrow.*"

Another Hindu writer, Pandit Sivanath Sastri, March 1881, expresses his opinion thus : "Caste is a very sorrowful thing. I do not think there is a single person here who would stand up and defend this monstrous custom, which has sapped the foundation of our national greatness, and has proved a serious obstacle in the way of the brotherhood of man. Caste has denied a cosmopolitan and broad culture to the people. . . . In order to give new life and vigour to our race it is necessary that there should be no caste. . . . Caste is a system which should be cast away!" . . . The report of this lecture is thus continued : "He (the lecturer) called on the audience to do away with the great evil of caste; but he would not be satisfied with that alone, there was the crying evil of the degraded and neglected condition of their women. They could not expect to make much progress in reform unless their women were educated, and allowed to use their healthy influence in society. As far as his experience went, he was convinced that their homes were barren and devoid of all social comforts. A husband could find no inducement to remain at home; he had to seek his pleasure abroad. . . . He next alluded to the cruel custom which exists regarding widows, and remarked that an old man of sixty would not scruple to marry a girl of eight, whilst the poor widow was an outcast all her life, after she had been deprived

of her husband. The condition of the widow was truly miserable, for she had no one on whom to rely; she was subject to unkindness from every one, and was liable to be driven in despair to commit a deadly crime. So long as such injustice was tolerated the nation could not rise. And out of the total population of India, there must at least be *six millions* of women suffering under this dreadful bane of widowhood!"

Professor Monier Williams, in his "Hinduism" (page 154), says: "Each society (or caste) keeps aloof from the other, and shuts itself up in its own independence. And yet within each caste individual independence is impossible, because no individual can act alone, but only in conjunction with his caste fellows."

In the midst of such a system, what is likely to be true of the heart of all human life, the domestic and family life?

The Hindu, inasmuch as he is scarcely more than a part of a system, is certainly by no means a very complete individual or man, and so it comes to pass that of home or home-life he has none.

He finds himself one in a family or household, as inexorably split up into divisions and fragments as his country and religious sections are. Fate has placed him there, and caste rules every fragment of his household as tyrannically as it rules outside. Possibly at the head of this group, amidst

the many groups which surround him, and into which this existence of his has been cast, his grandfather is ruling, or may be his great-grandfather, or that great-grandfather's brother. And every one of this patriarch's brothers and all their descendants have their share and rank, title and rights fixed by their successive births into this community. Their trade or calling is also fixed; is the old man a goldsmith? then were all his forefathers goldsmiths too, and all his descendants must be goldsmiths likewise. There may be fifty, there may be more, there may be less inhabitants of this household. What a man earns is not his own; it goes into the family treasury, and there is neither independence of action or life or thought for any one of them.

The men are all married, but they live apart, a group of men in one portion of the house; the women also in their separated life within the seclusion of their zenana walls. But one thing is pretty certain, that these zenanas are the darkest, dirtiest, and most wretched part of the whole establishment; even light is but grudgingly bestowed on the poor inmates of these prisons—but then a woman is but an inferior creature, and so this is all right! But we anticipate.

This boy inmate, of whom we speak, finds himself, some day in very early life, betrothed, by his *grandfather's* command and arrangement, to *some girl*, perhaps an infant of two or three

years old, whom he has not seen, nor does he see her till at the age of fifteen or thereabouts: whilst he is yet at school, he is sent to fetch her home to himself and his mother's or grandmother's zenana. Hitherto the elder women he has been allowed to see, and they to see and speak to him, but as each brother or cousin's wife came into the family circle, all he found out about the matter was that perchance he had less to do with his brother; for the little child-wife he never saw, and would have been held guilty of a great moral crime if he had accidentally looked her in the face; and she, poor child, would have been irretrievably disgraced had she by any mischance have allowed such a misfortune to happen to her, and life itself might have been the penalty of such an infringement of caste rules.

But now he has brought home his own little wife, and she, as the Chota Bow, takes the lowest place, at once the toy and slave of all the women. She has to learn some things, viz., to cook her husband's food, for no Hindu may eat what has been touched by one of inferior caste; so the men's morning and evening meals must needs be prepared by one or other of the various wives belonging to the family, unless, indeed, as is generally the case, there is a widow amongst the group who can have all the work and drudgery heaped upon her—for is she not the *cursed of gods and men*? However, even if this


be the case, the little child-wife must learn to do the family puja; she calls her husband lord, and for the most part is treated by him as his plaything or slave, and is often enough spoken of as one of his chattels! For her the weary days drag on; for him some change is not so rare; for his school, and then his life employment, his outside friends, and news of passing events, are at least "divertisements," and even inside the walls of the place of his abode the chances and changes of this mortal life gradually alter his status in the family; the old members die off, and he steps onwards through the various gradations, till, should he live long enough, he too becomes the head of his family, with all the rest dependent upon him. But all this is immutably fixed, and he can only move or wait as fate has decreed, and perform each routine duty as the wheel turns round, and neither think nor act for himself, for caste has shut him in.

This is Hinduism. A fortress to human sight well-nigh impregnable, the very stronghold of the Prince of this world. But "the weapons of Christian warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds." And beneath the banner of Him who is Almighty to save, English Christians may dare to assail even the central citadel of all this terrible system, even the zenana itself, and labour and wait and pray till its prisoners *are free*.

CHAPTER II.

ZENANA WRONGS.

"Such as sit in darkness and in the shadow of death : being fast bound in misery and iron."—PSALM cvii. 10.

F the woman's life and fate, already just touched upon, we must next give some brief sketch. The outline might be a few sharp touches as follows:—The unwelcome birth. The child-marriage. The lonely wife-life; its vacant, listless drag. The joys of motherhood. The horrors of widowhood. The gloomy future. Life without hope, and death in darkest despair.

Manu, the highest authority in Hindu law, tells us that "In childhood must a female be dependent on her father; in youth, on her husband; her lord being dead, on her sons. A woman must never seek independence."

On the other hand, if she exercises any will of her own, she is a *svairini*, an unchaste or immoral woman. For a female to aspire to the exercise of her free-will would be "shocking to the Hindu community!"

Manu further writes: "By a girl, or by a young woman, or by a woman advanced in years, nothing must be done, even in her own dwelling-place, according to her mere pleasure." After obtaining a husband she may at all times be legally superseded by another wife. . . . "If she have no children, she may be superseded in the eighth year; if her children be dead, in the tenth, and if she has *only daughters*, in the eleventh, and if she speaks unkindly, without delay. And when thus legally superseded, if she depart in wrath from the house (as well she may), she must either instantly be confined or abandoned in presence of the whole family." . . . According to Manu, the wife "has no business with the texts of the Veda," *i.e.*, the authoritative writings of her own religion. Hence we are informed: "Thus is the law fully settled; and having therefore no evidence of law and no knowledge of expiatory texts, sinful women must be as foul as falsehood itself; and this is a fixed rule."

No sacrifice and no religious rites are allowed to her apart from her husband. She is thus necessarily ignorant of her religion, and prohibited from the performance of such sacrifices as, according to her religion, might expiate her sins. Manu classes her along with "the stupid, the dumb, the blind, and the deaf (supposed to be cursed because of sins *in their preceding lives*), talking birds, decrepit old

men, and infidels," all of whom must be diligently removed at the time of consultation; for, says our great lawgiver, "above all are women apt to betray secret counsel. One man's word is of more weight than that of 'even many pure women.' She may be 'corrected' by her lord, to whom 'her mind, speech, and body are kept in subjection,' by means of 'a rope, or a small shoot of a cane,' and corrected to within an inch of her life; yet she can receive no relief from his cruelty by means of a divorce, however numerous his wives and concubines may be. He may have been married in infancy, when he had no knowledge whatever of what he was doing, or rather of what was being done for him; and he may never have lived with her, and never intend to; still he cannot get rid of her, and she cannot get rid of him, however anxious both may be for a legal separation with a view to marriages after their own will and pleasure."*

There are 100 millions of women in India, so we need not exaggerate the terrible thought of female infanticide, and yet it very surely does exist still. Not as in days gone by, before the British raj proclaimed the sacrifice of any human life "murder,"

* Quoted from Article IX., "Indian Evangelical Review," April 1881. These extracts have been used not with any intention of referring to the subject-matter of the article in which they occur, viz., "Notes on the Indian Marriage and Divorce Laws," but to *illustrate* the actual status of a Hindu woman as fixed by the law and religion of her country.

and when Kali and Gunga claimed their victims, both children and adults in hundreds yearly, but in less obtrusive and less numerous instances it certainly exists even to-day. Sir Richard Temple writes (page 190, "India in 1880"): "The government has for many years set itself to suppress this most inhuman practice by various measures, legislative and executive, with some considerable success at least, though probably not without some failure." We mention it, however, solely to illustrate the thought of how very unwelcome a poor little Hindu girl-child is when her existence becomes a fact.

Probably the disappointment expressed represents two distinctly different phases of feeling in the father's and the mother's minds. To him the girl-child is a disappointment, because, first of all, it means that the gods are displeased with him; secondly, because the sole end of a girl's life must be to get her married as well and as quickly as possible within the prescribed caste rules and limitations, and this will cost him much money; and thirdly, because the father's hopes for time and after death are absolutely dependent upon having a son who can perform the proper funeral-rites, without which none can pass safely through the gates of death to any measure of even that poor felicity which good deeds in one life may be hoped

to secure for the next. No wonder, therefore, that many a time the announcement "A girl is born" is followed by the quiet sign of the father's depressed and tightly-clenched thumb over the fingers of the right hand. No word is needed; the old hag nurses know too well its signification, and as quietly press their thumb on a well-known spot on the poor child's head, and all is accomplished! Who can tell how many such deeds of darkness still occur—we fear we may even write daily—behind the purdah?

But the mother's disappointment when a daughter is born probably touches on none of these points. She weeps "not a son," because she *knows* the misery of a Hindu woman's life, and pities the poor little one with such a future of inevitable woe; because she fears her husband's wrath; and because she too has been taught that no woman without sons can ever reach heaven at all.

Poor little Hindu maid, there truly is no possibility left of a welcome for you!

"Often I say to myself with a choking feeling," writes a lady medical missionary, "Alas! what has sin wrought? Here is a poor miserable child of three years, starved and ill; I order her codliver oil to be rubbed into its body, and the mother says, 'I don't think I'll take the trouble, for if she dies I shall have one less to care for!'"

And another missionary adds: "In one of my houses I found a poor little girl of not more than three months old lying, wholly neglected and uncared-for, on the floor, crying very bitterly, and apparently in much pain; but nobody came to render her any help. At last the grandmother appeared, but instead of taking her up and comforting the child, she showered anathemas upon the poor little thing, which greatly distressed me. So I asked the old woman to try and pacify the child; but imagine my horror when she exclaimed, 'Who cares for a girl? If God could take away the boy, let Him take the girl also. *I am not going to touch her. I would rather she died!*'"

Thus we illustrate that the Hindu girl allowed to live enters not on a very joyous life.

A Hindu lecturer before quoted, says: "Our women in these days know not what light is, what intellectual improvement means; they merely serve their husbands. The Indian woman is faithful to her husband; this is her one predominant characteristic. . . . And so long as we have not been able to educate our wives, our sisters, and our daughters in a proper way, we cannot have attained any amount of moral superiority. . . . Good mothers are wanted for the regeneration of India, therefore I will urge you first to elevate the degraded condition of your females, then try to reform your family *before you expect to reform society*," &c., &c.

. . . "The merciful hand of our God will come to our succour, be assured ; He will bless and elevate our nation. Such a happy day is to come, and I hope that you will labour hard, and look forward in expectation of that happy day when our wives will be blessed, our widows will be relieved from the thralldom of the manifold sufferings they now undergo, our daughters will be prepared to give us their opinions on subjects of vital interest, and our mothers will anxiously watch our progress in life."

We give these utterances because it seems meet to us, whenever practicable, to let the Hindu speak for himself. It is a native educated gentleman who, amongst an audience of fellow-countrymen, thus looks behind the purdah and speaks of the evils there. And be it remembered that this lecture from which we quote is scarcely two months old when we pen these extracts.* So that the strong, sorrowful, suggestive words apply to a present state of things—to India as it now is.

A rather severe critic not long ago hit upon this rebuke : "You write of the 100 millions of Indian women, but you never subtract aught for the children ; they surely must decrease somewhat from the round numbers of misery you are so anxious to impress upon us."

How we wish it were so ! But when a girl is

* It was delivered in Madras on September 6th, 1881, by Babu *Bipin Chandra Pal*.

married at eight years of age, what can we say of her girlhood ?

Of her wifehood, too, there is not much to tell. Begun at so early an age, and entered by the door of marriage ceremonies which may not be spoken of, revealing possibly to the immature little mind and being things and thoughts which should never have been stirred, she passes from infancy, as we should term it, into the duties and trials of mature life, or, at any rate, into the seclusion and imprisonment which terminate for ever any ideas of childhood. We suppose it is this fact, this dreary imprisoned life-doom, that is most appalling and most indescribable to our English liberty-loving, liberty-enjoying minds. This, in fact, is the pall overshadowing India, which, notwithstanding all its earthly beauty and glorious sunshine, renders it such a dull and joyless land.

If we seriously set ourselves to fathom this zenana life, what is it ? As we glance at it from one view and then from another, perhaps at first sight it only looks a little irksome. Indeed, we have even heard English sisters say as much. But try seriously to contemplate ourselves within the doomed circle. All day long, and every day for years in and years out, in one room ; four bare walls, and *nothing* more to look at but a square patch of sky occasionally. What should we think about ? “ Oh, what we did

yesterday, and what we have to do to-day," says one. But, alas! it is not the custom of Hindu ladies to *do* anything. "Things and people we had seen in times gone by," suggests another. Ah! true, so *we* might; but these poor weary ones have always been prisoners, and so they have no happy memories to feed upon. It is scarcely credible, I know, but it is true, that in the *city* zenanas are shut up lots and lots of women who have never even seen a tree, and, of course, if not a tree, then not one of the hundreds of different things which pass so constantly before even our babies' eyes and minds, forming sources of mental education and opening thoughtfulness. Truly I know not how to grasp the thought of the utter vacuity. Remember there are no other people's thoughts, no books, no finger-work of any kind, and no amusements, not many household duties, and no outside life, to break the pitifulness of it all.

I know I shall be met with the rebuke, "These are but exceptional cases, and it is not so all over India." But, alas! it must be urged that this is the broad general outline and the principle of the thing, and that the exceptional cases—and thank God there are now not a few exceptional cases—are the results of the efforts, of which we are about to speak, to get inside the zenana to break up its dreary monotony and let in the light. And the exceptions here, as in other things, prove the rule.

It has been said, and probably with much truth, that Mahomedanism brought the present zenana system to a climax. But though it may be credited with much of the miserable seclusion of the Hindu women, it was before Hindu husbands took to locking up their women from their Mahomedan conquerors that Manu wrote his directions which clasped around her the chain of ignorance and inferiority, and made it even virtuous of her to confess, "Mem Sahib, we are like the animals ; we can eat and work and die, but we cannot think."

And we have before shown that Hindu men themselves, and these, too, the educated and best amongst the different classes, speak openly, if sadly and all too despondingly, of the state to which, through one fault and another, Indian womanhood has been reduced.

We pass to another phase of the evil with the remark of one of these men ; he says : " An impenetrable darkness and chaos still broods over the greater part of India. See in what a life of drudgery and misery our mothers, our wives, and our daughters live." It is not we, therefore, who paint the picture black ; it has grown black with the accumulated wrongs of centuries, and as the outcome of an enforced ignorance, idleness, and neglect.

The men are suffering now as well as the women ; and truly we are glad, for till they could be made to feel that the ill came back upon themselves

there was little hope of its remedy. Hinduism is a terribly self-considering system, so not even national considerations or the general welfare could be made into strong enough arguments. The pinch must be felt pretty sharply and individually in order to awaken conviction. But the light which Christianity exhibits, happily shows to even heathen darkness that it is better to live in the sunshine than to exist in a rock-cave; it is happier to be working for others and their good, than to be always thinking of self and labouring to achieve nothing but one's own "liberation!"

There are other evils of Indian womanhood we have not touched upon, and we should scarcely do so except to bring forward to prominence the fact, which we have not overlooked, that in such a vast country as India there are and must be endless varieties, not only in national habits and customs, religious rules and observances, family distinctions and regulations, and even caste arrangements and tyrannies; so that it is easy, if we give illustrations of what prevails in the Punjab, for it to be very flatly contradicted by the natives of Travancore; or if we speak of Madras, for people in Bengal to say, "It is quite different here." For instance, the closest seclusion is in the valley of the Ganges; the greatest immorality and the laxest ideas of wifely fidelity in the south; the most obtuse ignorance and gravest

want of common sense, we fancy at least, prevails amongst the women of the plains, whilst the grossest superstitions and most horrible rites are practised by the Krishna worshippers called Vallabhacharyas. All are different, but all have this one description as reality—"Our women are in soul-slavery, degraded, ignorant, and superstitious."

We have passed over the joys of motherhood whilst we have been dwelling thus, perchance too lengthily, on the sorrows of wifehood: but rays of joy do come to gladden even a Hindu wife's heart; not infrequently, notwithstanding all the surrounding gloom, the husband does truly love his poor caged mate, and all her love goes out to him and to her children. One of the authors we have before quoted has the grace to say: "The one characteristic of our Indian woman is her love and faithfulness to her husband;" and all agree that a mother's love for her sons is supremely concentrated in those pent-up Hindu hearts; the passionate, loving heat must find its object behind the purdah as elsewhere, and the Hindu mother finds it in her boy; and for the most part those who have sons are satisfied notwithstanding all the dreary rest.

But of those who have neither husband nor son, those who have been robbed, not by Providence, but by wicked "fate," of all joy—of them how shall we write? "The Hindu widow is the most desolate and the most wretched creature upon God's earth." Ah!

this too is a Hindu wail. Terrible and sad it is that we can thus take up their own words to illustrate the evils that are living in their midst. "Let each Hindu household repeat its own tale," writes another. "The shame and sufferings of the widow are written in undying characters. Yet our hearts are not moved. The constant sight of suffering has made us callous and hard of heart. We view with cold indifference the life-long misery of the Hindu, and we do not even stir to remedy a social system pregnant with shame and mischief to our countrymen."

The following copious extracts are taken from a paper published in the "Indian Evangelical Review," August 1880:—

"The condition of Hindu widows is pitiable. From time to time one phase or other of their misery has excited public attention. A quarter of a century ago, Pundit Ishwar Chunder Vidyasagar aroused Bengal by representations of their sufferings, and spent a fortune on the almost fruitless endeavour to emancipate them from the law of Hindu society that forbids them to marry. Half a century ago, the Hindu widow, burning in the funeral pile with the dead body of her husband, was a spectacle so common here in Calcutta that the cries pierced the hearts, not of missionaries only, but of statesmen and legislators, and the strong hand of law sup-

pressed widow-burning, so that none but isolated cases are now heard of. Suttee has been abolished, the re-marriage of Hindu widows has been proved to be allowable by the ancient laws of the Hindus, nevertheless the present condition of Hindu widows is well-nigh as bad as it was at the beginning of this century.

“Hinduism requires that every Hindu girl be married in childhood; child marriage is the root cause of untold misery. If the boy-husband of the girl-wife die the day after the priests have completed the marriage, that girl is a life-long widow as strictly as though she had lived to be a true wife and the mother of a family before being left in widowed loneliness. Such widows are numerous. In the past, Hinduism demanded that widows consent to be burnt, and to such as refused to follow their husbands through the portals of death it left the alternative of a life of cheerless misery; hence when suttee was common, Hindu widows had the choice of a few minutes of torture in the funeral fire, or a life as full of misery as ingenious priests could crowd it. . . . But that door of exit from the living death of Hindu widowhood has been closed by hands that meant to perform a kindly deed. For fifty years the widows that would have departed through the short and sharp sufferings of the funeral fire have been kept in life—some of them to reproach the govern-

ment that closed their only way of escape. The abolition of suttee introduced a disturbing element into Hindu society, preserving in life a large number of Hindu widows who, but for the intervention of a Christian government, would have passed away.

"The large number of widows in Hindu society is evident to all. The census of Calcutta shows that there were 58,000 wives and 55,000 widows in the city !

"The difficulty of getting a correct knowledge of the condition of Hindu widows is great. They are as a class mute, and the constitution of the Hindu joint-family is such that events within it are screened as far as possible from persons outside the family. The laws of Manu assign woman a very low place, but those laws do not necessarily represent the state of the present generation. The Ramayan says, 'The life of one Brahmin equals that of a hundred women,' but that is a poetical notion. Dramas represent a widow, dying on an *ekadashi* fast-day, begging for a drop of water, and being told that she may have Ganges water put into her ear; but that may be fiction.* There are difficulties peculiar to the case of widows that obscure their real state. However, difficulties notwithstanding, even foreigners have

* On the contrary, zenana missionaries very frequently come across such cases, and plead, and plead in vain, that the cruel treatment may be mitigated.

channels through which they can obtain no considerable amount of accurate information. A chief difficulty in representing the case of the Hindu widow is not so much that her real state cannot be known, as that some of the bitterest dregs in her cup cannot be named in public. Some of the most distressing temptations incident to Hindu widowhood must remain almost unnamed.

“In certain cases the Hindu religion allows re-marriage. If the husband die, or if he go away and be not heard of for twelve years, or if he change his religion, or if he become a devotee, or in certain other cases, *theory* allows re-marriage, but *practice* is quite otherwise. Among the lower classes some widows do re-marry, but among the middle and higher classes the re-marriage of widows is forbidden. No family can allow the re-marriage of a widow without being subjected to heavy social penalties.

“The widow must eat but one meal of rice in twenty-four hours, and that of a particular kind; no fish, no animal diet, no sweetmeats from shops, no curds, no oil, no betel-nut. Twice a month she must fast twenty-four hours, besides many other fasts during the year. There are particular times when she is obliged to fast for two or three consecutive days. The fasting of ordinary days may be mitigated by taking a little fruit, or milk, or barley,

but if she be dying of thirst on a fast-day, she dare not touch a drop of water. If a dying widow ask for water on a fast-day, a few drops are dropped into her ear. At certain times she should eat her food off the bare floor. If she be touched while eating, she must leave her food, and she loses it for that day. The sufferings of fast-days are very great in the hot season: not so bad in the cold weather. The eyes burn and become dim, the feeling of hunger is great, the mouth is parched with thirst, the hands and body burn and are uncomfortable. Years of habitual fasting do not take away these distressing feelings.

“The widow must not do her hair as when her husband was alive. She must shave her head on appointed occasions. She must wear no ornament of any kind, nor coloured clothing, but must dress in common white cloth. She must, after the death of her husband, for a time, sleep on the bare floor without even a pillow. At appointed times she should bathe in the Ganges. She should make many pilgrimages, attending to certain religious ceremonies day and night. She should give to the priests such food as her husband liked when he was living. Strong or weak, she must observe the appointed ceremonies.

“A Bengali Christian lady, in the course of a conversation as to her own experience when a Hindu

widow, said: 'I became a widow when I was twelve years old. My father was a priest, and when I began to fast he fasted with me to encourage me. I was a Hindu widow for twelve years, and have a vivid remembrance of the sorrows of that time. The fasting was very hard; to fast twenty-four hours in the hot season without food or water is almost unbearable. Though I fasted regularly all those years, I never got used to it. I had to do all sorts of menial work, and to bear taunts that sometimes tempted me to give abuse in return. My own brother has said, when suddenly meeting me, "Oh, I have seen the face of that childless widow, I must make an atonement." I remember being once so provoked as to reply, "As sure as I worship the gods, your own daughter shall be a childless widow, and you shall look upon her face." I was provoked to this wicked speech. I was one day seated at the foot of a tree, and heard my little nephew, who was on the roof of the house, reading the Psalms of David. I did not then know what the book was. As I listened, the words so entered my mind that I went up on the roof to my nephew. He was alarmed when he saw me, and hid the book under him. I asked him what book he was reading. He said, "You won't tell if I tell you?" I replied, "No. Why?" He said, "Because it is a Christian book. Mother tore up one book like this and threw it

in the mire. If she should know I have this, she would destroy it and beat me." At my request he read three or four psalms to me. I can never forget them. I 'determined to go to those who followed that book. I waited three years before I found the opportunity.'

"The Hindu community itself is taking no steps to improve the condition of Hindu widows, nor is the legislature doing anything. The government put down infanticide and suttee, but it has not yet taken any steps to diminish child marriage. The Hindu community debated the subject of widow marriage, but almost no such marriages take place. They talked and wrote much about the evils of child marriage, but child marriages are the universal practice. The native community, like other communities, get occupied with different questions at different periods. At one period religious subjects were much debated, then social reforms came into fashion, but for the last three or four years politics have been uppermost. If child marriage could be condemned in practice as it has been condemned in words, and if Hindu widow re-marriage could be as honestly approved generally as it has been eloquently advocated by a few, then hope of the native community reforming itself in the matter of the Hindu widow's hard lot might be entertained. But no *ground* for such hope is visible.

“The Hindu widow must look to the Church of Christ for deliverance. Hindu widows are superstitious, they need enlightenment; they are bound hand and foot amid social entanglements, they need to be freed; they are dependent on persons for support who often regard them as a burden and a curse; they need in many cases to be put in the way of earning an honest living. All this is a work of vast magnitude. To faith alone does its accomplishment seem possible. However, events are proving that there is faith now like to that of the prophet who said, ‘Ah Lord God! behold, Thou hast made the heaven and the earth by Thy great power and stretched-out arm, and there is nothing too hard for Thee.’”

A Hindu lady thus writes of these woes: “O Lord! why hast Thou created us to make us suffer thus? From birth to death, sorrow is our portion. While our husbands live we are their slaves; when they die, we are still worse off. But *they* have all they wish here, and promises for the life to come. O God! I pray Thee, let no more women be born in this land!”

Another: “Our Queen Empress is a widow, can she not help us? The Sahib-log did away with suttee, but it was less cruel than this long, lingering torture. Would that I could die. I must die; any life is better than this; even an animal, a worm, is less miserable than this.”

And yet another Hindu sister, looking upon her caged but fretting bird, breaks forth into verse, which, very literally translated, runs thus* :—

“Think how miserable we,
Captives in zenanas drear,
Lowest thralls, and crushed by fear.

Still the same—we drag along,
Ignorant of right and wrong ;
Knowledge and religion none !
Life a dreary monotone !

Thou wert not a slave always ;
Thou but comest a few days,
Just to look on misery ;
Then away thy sorrows flee.

But the heart will die before
Half our trials it count o'er ;
Oh, were I a dove like thee,
Then, methinks, I'd blessed be !

Bird ! thy happier lot to see
Makes a woman envy thee ;
Filled with shame, she hides her face,
So to cover her disgrace.

Shall I speak to God on high ?
But I tremble as I try !
We are not Thy daughters, sure,
Who must woes like these endure !

All untrained in truth, the soul—
Swayed alone by harsh control ;

* The Hare Prize Poem. Written by a Bengali lady—not a widow, but a woman into whose soul the “iron” had entered.

On, like purchased slaves, we go :
Ah ! dost *Thou* then mean it so ?

Still, although the heart is broken,
Must the pang remain unspoken ?
Veil the face, and hide the woe !
Ah ! dost *Thou* then mean it so ?

Wretched custom's helpless slaves,
'Whelmed in superstition's waves,
Thus our precious life doth go :
Ah ! dost *Thou* then mean it so ?"

And yet another : "We are prisoners from our birth, and life-long sufferers . . . and our fathers, brothers, husbands, sons, keep us in this prison ; and while they combine to keep us there, there is no hope for us. . . . No Hindu brother pauses to think that it is to his own hurt he keeps us down in this misery, but it is. We women are shut up in a pit of ignorance. Hearing of our condition, the eyes of strangers fill with tears. But you leave us there. Have you no pity in your hearts ?"

Readers, the picture is real, though so overwhelmingly sad. We have written only after long, patient, and careful research, and have ventured on but few original thoughts or descriptions. We have left the sufferers for the most part to speak for themselves, but the cry is gone up, and He who judgeth for the oppressed and the widow has said—"If not, I will know."

CHAPTER III.

MISSIONARY EFFORT.

“God said, Let there be light.”—GEN. i. 3.

“And to them which sat in the region and shadow of death, light is sprung up.”—MATT. iv. 16.



UNTO the midst of such a state of society, Christianity having aroused herself to see what was around, was bound, by her Lord's own command, to project some remedy. He had said, “Preach the gospel to every creature,” and here were 100 millions of women to whom it never had been preached; so hedged in, moreover, by all these inexorable laws and customs which we have tried to describe, that it seemed impossible for them ever to be reached.

But He, the Lord of all, never gave a command which could not be carried out. So when the great evil, of these millions of women shut away in darkness unto despair, began to reveal itself to Christianity, the God-given thought was sent, “If secluded from men they must be reached by women; *and if the ordained missionary is prevented pro-*

claiming in their ears the glad tidings of salvation, then sister missionaries must be sent, with the Word in their hands and on their lips, to tell it out to these sorrowful ones that there is no real hindrance, but life and salvation is free, absolutely free, to them also."

Thus like Gideon's cake of barley-bread, which tumbled into the host of Midian, did this idea of zenana ministrations fall amongst that great multitude of Indian idolaters. The unlikeliest of missiles, it has yet smitten the evil so that it already totters to its fall, and presently it will lie altogether overturned, for it is Gideon's God who ensures the victory, and His voice which sounds out the call, "Arise, for the Lord hath delivered into your hand the host."

The history of this zenana missionary work is certainly the most wonderful and important, interesting and touching, chapter in the annals of modern missions. Would that we could give it in detail, but we must be satisfied with a bird's-eye view, leaving every reader, we hope, determined to follow up the record and fill in the sketch for themselves, either by taking an actual part in the battle of light against darkness, or by following up the accounts of the workers as they are now given in so many channels.*

It is said that the year 1821 saw the first organ-

* The magazine of the Church of England Zenana Missionary Society, "India's Women," published by Messrs. Nisbet & Co. every alternate month, is full to overflowing with materials for this continuous study of the news of the battle and its victories.

ised effort to reach and teach "India's women," and that a girl-child's tears opened the first possibilities of the long "mountainous way" for the feet of "the messengers" to pass over.

Miss Cooke had been invited from England by a Society of Christian Ladies in Calcutta, who had been led to the point that *something* should be done for the women of that vast country. And so Miss Cooke went; but where was she to begin the stupendous task? That one little weeping girl was to be the beginning.

Mark the point, for the whole work is characterised by similar lessons of the growth and blessing resulting from a patient but immediate discharge of "little things;" in fact, it is, throughout, a chapter of strength out of weakness, of God taking the weak things to confound the mighty, of blessing on following faithfully only a step at a time, each step taken revealing more and more of the onward way and further possibilities.

Possible it was *not* when Miss Cooke landed in Calcutta to go into any zenana; the doors had not yet been opened. The ladies of Bengal at least, and, to a very large extent, of all India, were as though they were not, to all European eyes; they were *never seen* "purdahed," *i.e.*, behind the curtains, zenana ladies.

Possible enough was it to *see* the poor, degraded, *miserable*, low-caste women. There they were in the

bazaars and markets, in the streets and fields, doing all the meanest and most servile work, wretched, uncared for, almost loathsome in their degradation, and treated by their fellows even worse than the dogs. But to *reach* these wretched ones seemed almost as impossible as the other effort to get at their richer, though scarcely less miserable sisters. The one class were veritably imprisoned in locked and guarded zenanas; the others were shut out, as it were, by hatred and prejudice from all help whatever. The idea of being taught was to them sheer nonsense; they could not even take in the idea of what was meant. "Mem Sahib, we are like the animals; we can work and die," was all the answer they could give. So whilst *waiting*, Miss Cooke set to work to teach the boys.

Boys had sisters, and into the little crannies of one brain somehow entered the idea that it was good to learn, and that she would like to try. So one morning, leaning outside the shed which served Miss Cooke's boys for a schoolroom, was found a poor, little, unclothed, brown skeleton of a girlie, weeping as if her heart would break! Ah yes, it was very evident that this was a little bit of humanity—not an animal, but a being with a heart and feelings different, and somehow higher.

A tender womanly touch is laid on the little weeping one's shoulder, and "Little girl, why are

you crying so? what is the matter? Tell me," though spoken in gentlest voice and tone, startles the curious little being, who, with a hasty upward glance of fright into the Mem Sahib's face, would have fled. But *no*; the detaining hand is firm, and the voice as lovingly reiterates, "Little one, you must tell me why you are weeping so." "I want to go to the school, I want to be taught, but they only teach the boys, and I am a girl," sobs the poor little child; and thus she opens the door for the vast effort towards Indian Female Evangelisation, which has been going on ever since. Very soon, even within a single month, two other schools were established, one in a different quarter of the town, and another on the Church of England Mission premises, containing in all between fifty and sixty girls. And within a couple of years there were twenty-four such schools, with an average attendance of four hundred girls! Well may India be reminded to thank God for that child's tears.

This was all in the days of good Bishop Heber, and he, with Mrs. Heber, Archdeacon and Mrs. Corrie, and others, gave to the effort their warmest sympathy and support. And the work grew,—for some time, for years indeed, only amongst the low-caste girls and women, but they were showing themselves capable of being taught.

Presently these girls' schools were begun here and

there in the various scattered mission stations, for it required the love of Christianity and its hopefulness, with also the assurance that God would have all *women* to be saved, and counted their souls as dear to Himself as those of their fellow-men, to urge on to this "*un-important*" work. The Government with its secular education, and the natives with their ideas of the worthlessness of women, never thought to stop to teach them! Indeed, in Hindu religious law there is a strict prohibition against any such things; "It is a sin to teach a woman anything."

However, missionary effort and its success by and by persuaded even these two antagonistic powers not only to cease opposition, but actually to join in giving some sort of education to the girls as well as to the boys.

Nevertheless, female education is, for the *most part*, still in the hands of the different missionary societies; and we are glad, for it would be offering our poor sisters stones instead of bread, if we went to teach them only of this life, and did not strive, whilst winning them from idolatry, to make them safe as well as free, as followers of the Gospel of Christ.

Surely it is not only quite correct, but a very obvious triumph, to be able to say that these girls'

schools are now counted by thousands all over India.*

But the following paragraph in a paper on "Primary Education in the Madras Presidency," in the July number of the "Indian Evangelical Review," is a significant warning against contentment with our effort; the battle is still against us, and the day is far spent, what shall we do to meet the emergency? "But the fact remains, that in 1822 there were 990,000 boys (in the Madras Presidency) without education; in 1854 the number had doubled to 1,800,000, and in 1880 it has grown to 2,600,000! *And this is less than half the truth* respecting the educational destitution of the Presidency, *for here is not a word about girls. In 1822 and in 1854 THEY WERE NOT TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT. Are we to leave them out now?* Out of 2,830,000 of school-going age, that is, between seven and fourteen, only 26,000 are actually at school; so that the problem yet remaining is—how to give the barest elements of education to these 2,600,000 boys and these 2,800,000 girls who are now without it?"

And further, on the authority of the General Council on Education in India—than which surely none ought to be furnished with more accurate

* Sir Richard Temple says, "There are no fewer than 70,000 girls at school in British India" (see "India's Women," May 1881, page 157).

statistics—we can state the following appalling fact with regard to educational results for *all India*, “that while provision was made for the education of only 1,812,348 children in India, *there was no provision made* for 25,532,576 of school age.”

Reader, pass not these figures by as dry statistics. They are full of vital importance and deepest interest to every one of us. Thus is India growing upon our hands. These millions of increasing populations are our fellow-subjects, ours as an eternal responsibility, and what are we doing for them ?

Here is another statement on the above authority : “It is a fact that, notwithstanding what has been done during the last twenty-seven years, we are further from the education of the mass of the people than when we began, for, while we do not add 50,000 children a year to our schools, the birth-rate adds nearly 200,000 children of school age to the population of the country.”

If these 200,000 children are not gathered into Christianity, they are left in heathenism, in that darkness which is the shadow of eternal death ; and Satan’s slaves are thus increased by 200,000 yearly in that one empire. Alas ! Christian, does this beat thee to thy knees ? It is well. But “gird up the loins of your mind ; be sober, and hope ;” and though the battle is sore, the victory is sure if we are faithful.


But here is a long digression, and we return to our history of zenana missionary work amongst India's women.

We have told the first step, the story of Girls' Schools in India, and these amongst the lower castes were for a long while after 1821 all that could be done.

Zenana work was not yet begun, and behind the purdah we could not penetrate. But the next step towards the attainment of this aim was the opening in Calcutta of a Girls' Normal School, that is, a school for the training of girls as teachers for their high-caste women whenever they could be reached. It was a venture of faith, and as such it has been honoured and blessed. It was begun in 1851. Perhaps not a few inquired, "Why this foolish preparation? The idea of educating the zenana women is absurd; the Babus will take care you never penetrate the recesses of their homes," &c., &c. And all this seemed very true. But the word had gone out, and hearts had been somehow moved in Calcutta at least to try. And, moreover, here was a special class, the Eurasians, who greatly needed help for themselves—a middle class, neither European nor Native, but sprung from both. They had, alas! many disabilities, whilst they had also some special qualifications which marked it out at least *as a worthy aim to prepare them for the great*

educational effort which was, it was hoped, now to be made. Country born, the climate was natural to them ; they could stand its heat as English immigrants were not likely to do. Surrounded by Hindus—though, alas ! despising them very much, and being alike despised—they were, however, at least familiar with the sound of the various vernaculars, and it was thought they would soon become masters of it for all educational purposes. Free to come and go, they were English in all their customs and habits, so that education was in itself an immense boon to them ; and up to this time pride and prejudice, so easily understood but so difficult to overcome, had greatly stood in their way. And they really formed a danger to Christianity ; for, Christians in name—as a class that was well-nigh all—they had been isolated and neglected, and now they were an almost godless race, between sorrowing Christians on the one hand, and deriding heathen on the other. Very much like our lapsed masses at home ; a difficult subject, only to be overcome by patience and prayer.

Was it not then a wise and holy thought to choose the girls of this strange anomalous people and try to raise them into channels of good to those amongst whom their lot had been cast, though they acknowledged them not as brethren, and to the land where they were born, though they would not own it as their country ? We think it was, and the venture



has proved that they at least are not ungrateful recipients of the opportunity offered to them. In the twenty years since the opening of the Calcutta Normal School, some 200 girls, not all Eurasians, but mostly so, have passed through its course of training, and have turned out good and faithful teachers to the pupils committed to their care, and zealous missionaries in the service of the Church which thus stretched out a hand to help them in their need.

We must not here stop to trace all the effects of this episode on the Eurasians themselves, though we think we are justified in declaring that it has been a "lift up" to the whole class in Calcutta, and that in it and in them has been again exemplified the "power of littles."

But these girls were trained as teachers for the Hindu zenana ladies—have they ever found their work to do? Indeed they have; and every one of them, after proving their own capabilities by passing sufficiently high test-examinations, have been engaged in most valuable work as assistants to the English lady missionaries who have since consecrated themselves to work for the Master in the now wide open field of zenana visitation and teaching in India. For long years this Calcutta Normal School was the only one in all India, and even yet it is the only one in all Bengal, with its 36,300,000 of *people*.

There are some interesting points about the school which ought to be put on record. It is a handsome building in Cornwallis Square, and so very close upon the native town. It is the building which was first used for Miss Cooke's amalgamated schools, and was called the "Central School." Its original use is still preserved, in that the lower part of it is and always has been reserved for the education of native children; the Normal School pupils using this as a practising school, thus also marking the continuity of the work from the point we have designated as its beginning, viz., Miss Cooke's one little girl pupil in 1822.

The foundation-stone was laid on the 18th of May 1826; the sum of R.20,000 having been given by a liberal Hindu, Rajah Boidonath Roy Bahadour, the rest of the R.45,000 which the building cost being raised by private subscription and a grant of the Church Missionary Society.

How curiously golden threads of contradiction, to the supposed order of circumstances, cross themselves in the tissue of events! Here is a Hindu rajah, himself a heathen, just when things looked so very dark for Hindu women, and the wise ones were proclaiming the foolishness of thinking of their emancipation, giving £2000 to provide some hope of *Christian* education for these ignorant women—a clog, as he plainly saw, on the wheels of India's progress. And not only did Boidonath Roy Baha-

door himself participate in the laying of the foundation-stone, but he brought other Hindu Babus with him to witness, with apparent goodwill, the beginning of this effort, which had for its avowed object the amelioration of their enslaved women, their education and ultimate Christianity.

It was just before dawn.

This interesting school is the Calcutta Normal School of the Church of England Zenana Missionary Society, and it is still carried on with vigour and good effect, and is yearly turning out efficient teachers for the masses of willing zenana pupils, whose numbers are now so great that the difficulty of to-day is to provide teachers quickly enough for the demand.

The Normal School Branch of this establishment was begun in 1851, and, as we before stated, was then the only effort of the kind anywhere in India.

But now every mission in India is trying to maintain some similar branch of work—that is, endeavouring to train their converts and elder girls into teachers for the millions still heathen, for this has become *the present exigency*. More teachers, “Give us teachers!” is the cry of the women themselves, and “More labourers, more labourers,” the entreaty of every one engaged in the contest now.

A glance off to some of these other schools will show the progress of the movement.

In scarcely one of the new ones are the pupils Eurasians or Europeans, but Natives, marking by this fact one chapter closed in the history of female education in India; for when the Calcutta Normal School was by its committee thrown open to Eurasians, not a single Native woman could have been found to take a place in its classes. But now there are Native women everywhere, Christian and heathen, willing and eager thus to fit themselves for getting their own living. In the Amritsar normal classes there are Hindu, Sikh, and Mussulman women side by side with Christian converts, eagerly preparing themselves for Government examination; and the same sort of thing is going on in Delhi, in Lucknow, in Benares, in Bombay, and in many another city beside.

Then again the orphanages, as at Agurpara, Secundra, Dera Doon, Palamcotta, and Madras, so liberally planted throughout the country, and sustained by government, by private and missionary philanthropy, &c., are turning their senior classes into training classes, and are thus helping to supply this increasingly great demand; whilst the Alexandra School for native Christian girls of the upper classes, also belonging to the Church Missionary Society and the Church of England Zenana Missionary Society conjointly, is educating some fifty native young ladies for the high and holy work which is opening

before them as Christian governesses and missionaries to their still uneducated, untaught, unchristianised sisters in millions all around.

There are other such Christian schools which should be named, notably those at Lahore, Bombay, and Madras; but does not their very existence prove the progress Christianity is making in India? for here are some hundreds of Christian daughters being prepared to take their places as well-educated Christian ladies, wives, mothers, and mistresses, as well as teachers, and they are the children and grandchildren of those whom Christianity has already won from heathenism to Christ.

We might instance one very remarkable illustration of this thought, a native lady in Madras, a Christian of the fifth generation, the wife of a native pastor, with daughters hard at work in the mission-field, and herself the centre and organiser of every sort of good work in her husband's well-worked parish.

Truly India is getting its Phebes and Eunices.

But there are millions still who have not even heard of Jesus.

Such is the story of the Normal School episode up to this date—1881.

Now we return to trace the third stage from 1854.

In that year Zenana work was a fact. And in *Calcutta* one and another Babu cautiously, and it

may be with some trepidation, opened the long-closed door and let a ray of light and a whiff of fresh air into his hitherto rather stifling domestic prison, in and with the person of some English lady missionary or one of her assistant Normal School teachers. For it is a happy sequence in this chain of events that as soon as these Normal School pupils are ready for the work for which they have been prepared, the work is ready for them to undertake.

One feels constrained to pause and cry aloud Hallelujah! It is true that here, as in almost all such movements, there was a simultaneous, almost imperceptible achievement of the long-desired aim, and it is not worth while to debate who won the first zenana pupil. And we may be very sure that not one of the godly women then standing eagerly prepared to throw themselves into the breach, ever thought of the rivalry of time; they were only a few scattered ones, and were too glad to hail the given opportunity to care to which of them it came first. It came; zenanas opened; and ever since the struggle has been to occupy adequately the golden opportunity thus by God presented to His Church.

Previously, in pages 21-23, we have described a Hindu boy's life-surroundings, now we must let his portion of the picture dissolve into that of his child-wife; but before doing so, one word of explanation

is necessary to show how he had been affected by English power, English thought, English education, and, let us hope, by English Christianity also, before any thought of change with regard to his domestic concerns could enter his head.

We must not go back far enough to trace the whole process, for that had been going on amongst the *men* of India, slowly it might be, still going on for some 200 years before the chapter we are writing could begin at all.

But the Hindu gentlemen who first gave English Christian women a peep into their *zenanas* were surely those who, having themselves been educated and got their minds awakened to ideas of right and wrong, could see how bitter was the shame to their country, and how cruel the wrong which they were inflicting on their women, and how miserably they and their forefathers together had bereft themselves of every semblance of civilised homes. They began to wonder why their women were so degraded, and why they could not have wives who might be companions, and then they began to see that to attain this they must suffer their wives to be taught; and they further felt truly enough that they could most safely entrust all this to English Christian ladies. Specimens of such they had seen as the wives and daughters of Christian missionaries, *governors* and civilians, and they knew they might

trust them; and so here again was that working out of right and truth which every disciple has to live out, not only for himself but for others. "For no man liveth to himself."

For this hour missionaries and educationists had toiled on in hope—men like Duff, and Wilson, and Noble; and here it was at last.

The men of India, some few of them at least, were longing for companions instead of slaves, for intellectual friendship instead of childish playfellows. And the pioneers were right in their conjecture that the movement must begin with the men themselves; and to make them feel their own want of educated wives was the only possible first step towards getting the wives educated. And it is fair to state that some of these first aspirants after better things began the work of advance by patiently and perseveringly, in their hours of leisure, teaching the little wife the first alphabet of learning. And it is said that when the first zenana was visited in Calcutta, the lady missionary found the young girl-wife writing a copy on her slate which the husband had left ready for that day's task, and the words he had chosen for her were, "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?"

But it was only here and there, one in a thousand, nay, one in millions, that such a scene could be possible; the whole vast country lay in darkness that

could be felt, and an ignorance on the women's part which was complete. A few years later on and it was written in all good faith, "The advance of civilisation and enlightenment is already thundering at the doors of this cruel captivity." But at present it was only the gentle tap of tenderest love and pity which could avail; and the dungeon keys turned rustily enough, but still they did turn, to let in these Christian women bearing the light of Christ's truth to the sorrowful, miserable sisters, whose woe-ful bondage and darkness, ignorance and idolatry, had wrought such sadness in the land.

Our next chapter shall be of what they found "within Zenana walls."

CHAPTER IV.

WAITING FOR THE MESSAGE.

“Tidings, sent to every creature,
Millions yet have never heard,
Can they hear without a preacher?
Lord Almighty, give the word.
Give the word ; in every nation
Let the Gospel trumpet sound,
Witnessing a world’s salvation
To the earth’s remotest bound.”

A HINDU WOMAN’S PRAYER.*



LORD! hear our prayer. No one has turned an eye on the oppression which we suffer, though with weeping and crying and desire we have turned to all sides hoping that some would save us. No one has lifted up his eyelids to look upon us or to inquire into our case. We have searched above and below, but Thou art the only One who will hear our complaint. Thou knowest our impotence, our weakness, our dishonour. O Lord! inquire into our case.

* Copied from “The Cry at Night and the Song at Sunrise,” by A.L.O.E., C.E.Z.M.S., Missionary at Batala.

“For ages dark ignorance has brooded over our minds and spirits; like a cloud of dust it rises and wraps us round, and we remain like prisoners in an old and mouldering house, choked and buried in the dust of custom. We have no strength to go out; bruised and beaten, we are like dry husks of the sugar-cane when the sweet juice has been extracted.

“All-knowing God, hear our prayer, forgive our sins, and give us power of escape that we may see something of Thy world. O Father! when shall we be set free from this jail! O Lord! for what sin have we been born to live in this prison? From Thy throne of judgment justice flows, but it does not reach us; in this our life-long misery only injustice comes near us. O Thou Hearer of prayer! if we have sinned against Thee, forgive: but we are too ignorant to know what sin is. Must the punishment of sin fall upon those who are too ignorant to know sin?

“O Great Lord! our name is written with drunkards, with lunatics, with imbeciles, with infants, with the very animals! As they are not responsible, we are not. Criminals confined in jails are happier than we are, for they know something of the world. They were not born in prison; but we have not for one day, no, not even in our dreams, seen the world, and what we have not seen we cannot imagine. It is to us nothing but a name; and not having seen the world, we cannot *know Thee*, its Maker. Those who have seen Thy

works may learn to understand Thee ; but for us who are shut in, it is not possible to learn to know Thee. We see only the four walls of a house : shall we call them the world, or India ? We have been born in the dungeon ; we have died here, and are dying.

“O Father of the world ! hast Thou not created us ? or has perchance some other god made us ? Dost Thou care only for men ? Hast Thou no thought for us women ? Why hast Thou made us male and female ? O Almighty ! hast Thou no power to make us other than we are, that we too might have some share in the comforts of life ? The cry of the oppressed is heard even in the world. Canst Thou look upon our victim hosts and shut Thy doors of justice ?

“O God, Almighty and unapproachable ! think upon Thy mercy, which is like a vast sea, and remember us ! Have our sighs sufficed to exhaust the sea of Thy mercy ? or has it been dried up by the fire of fierce oppression with which the Hindu men have scorched us ? Have they, the Hindu men, drank, by some one’s mistake, that portion of the water of immortality which should refresh our weary spirits ! O Lord ! save us, for we cannot bear our hard lot. Many of us have killed ourselves, and are still killing ourselves. O God of mercies ! our prayer to Thee is this,—that this curse be removed from the women of India. Create in the hearts of men some sympathy, that our lives

may no longer be passed in vain longing. Thus, saved by Thy mercy, we may taste something of the joy of life."

Such was the terrible wail that was going up into the ears of the Lord God of Sabaoth, when He touched the hearts of His women-disciples and made them His "messengers" of "glad tidings" to this weary, crying multitude. True, this actual wail found voice only after some years, when this poor woman had so far got into the light as to know and believe that her gods, whom she had served so long, could neither help her nor yet any of their miserable worshippers, and that the chain which so fearfully tortured, not only herself, but the 100 millions of fellow-countrywomen in the same sad plight, could only be broken by the love of the Great God of whom the Mem Sahibs spoke.

But it was nevertheless into the midst of this crushing misery that the King's messengers went, and they found it everywhere a dread reality; though some did not feel the gall so bitterly, still the chain was there, and the bitterness and the wrong. Was it not well that the messengers could answer in the King's name, "The truth shall make you free!"

Our dissolving view must now be completed.

Driving up, or carried in a doolie, to the door of a native's house, the lady missionary would, in those early days of pioneering work, wait with some trepi-

dation to see the Babu. For though actually invited by one of the younger men to visit and teach his wife, she still would have to ask permission of the head Babu to let her in, for he has the key of the whole situation, and unless he will unlock the door, entrance is impossible.

We would that readers should remember this, for it has been argued that it was not fair to enter even a heathen's house by subtlety and teach his wife things he did not approve and did not wish her to learn. Truly, no; but in very fact there was no chance of such a mistake, even had there been the wish, which there was not.

The entrance to a Bengal zenana was not so accomplished; rather did it need the King's grace in the hearts of His messengers to overcome all the obstacles and barriers that they found in the way.

Only by the direct permission and invitation of the old father, and often also of his far more bigoted wife, the Burra Bow or head zenana lady, could any visit be achieved, for caste, and custom, and precedent rule as exactly in the zenana as they do in the relations of one man with another.

But let us suppose this entrance granted, and go in with the missionary to describe what she finds.

We leave the men's apartments behind; we have nothing to do with them but a passing glance, which tells of selfish ease and plenty there abiding.

chairs and sofas and English comforts having found their place with and beside the Oriental display and luxury. The men evidently know how to take care of themselves.

We pass through the courtyard to a small door in a recess, actually at this house and on this occasion locked and barred, at which the conducting Babu stops, and, with Oriental courtesy, explains to the missionary that the Burra Bow knows of her intended visit, that her salaams have been sent forward into the zenana, and that she is expected by the ladies; that at the top of the stairs, if she will kindly walk up, she will be met by one of the younger ladies; and then he adds, "You must please excuse their want of etiquette, &c." (the *et-cætera* being intended to cover all sorts of amazing deficiencies, which he is conscious will greatly astonish the Englishwoman); "for you see, Madam, they are but foolish, ignorant women, and what can you expect from them?"

The missionary replies with a smile, "Thank you, Babu, I am sure they will be polite to me; you see I am a woman too! And as you are allowing me to visit your ladies on purpose to teach them, they very soon will show you that they are clever, not foolish, and perhaps will become quite learned."

An incredulous shake of the head and a courteous, "Madam, you do us great honour," accompanied the *opening* of the door, and the lady adds, "You know,

Babu, I am the King's messenger, and must tell your ladies first of all about His holy religion, our beautiful, happy Christianity." And again the Babu waives his hand as if to say proceed, and replies before closing the door behind her, "Yes, Madam, I know, indeed I suppose it is really this that makes you English ladies so different to our poor stupid wives." * Evidently he has some glimmering of the truth, and he speaks beautiful English, and that he seems to be quite aware of.

But the door is shut, and there we are in the dark; but we stumble up the narrow staircase, and come out into a long narrow passage not quite so dark, but only with little slits high up in the wall on one side, letting in both light and air, though not much of either. Presently at the far end of this passage a huddled, frightened-looking group of women are apparent, and, cured of her own nervousness by the sight of theirs, so obviously more intense, the lady steps forward, and in the best Bengali she can summon to her aid, after the imperative "Salaam, salaam," says, "Your Babus say I may pay you a visit; may I see the Burra Bow?" At this the whole group gather their chuddars closely round them, as if to prevent a stray corner getting too near the Christian, and one says, "Come," and, followed by the missionary and her native assistant teacher, they

* An actual conversation.

all pass into the verandah. This verandah has thus contrived to turn its back to all the open courtyard, and simply looks over a slip of ground with an uncomfortable-looking tank in the middle, and on the opposite side the dull blank mud wall of the next neighbouring house, which has considerably been built with the back of its women's apartments this way.

At the far end of the verandah sits, or rather squats, the Burra Bow; on the ground, of course, with knees drawn up to the chin, thin grey hair just showing beneath the chuddar, which, as she is old, is thrown somewhat carelessly back, so unlike the younger women, who, for the most part, clutch theirs nervously, keeping nearly the whole of their faces covered. But, oh! the terrible unrest, unsatisfied, sorrowful longing that is gleaming from those sunken eyes! truly the poor old body looks more like the frightened animal she has been likened to than the missionary cares to see. She knows she must not touch her, or even go too near, for, wretched and miserable as she is, she would resent the touch of the Christian as sore pollution. But possibly the tender, pitiful look is rightly read, for when the missionary says, "Lady, may I read to you, may I tell you of my King?" the instant reply is courteous enough. "Certainly," the Babu said; "you were *coming* for that very purpose; sit, Mem Sahib."

But at the same time she points with her brown finger to a far corner of the verandah, where the lady takes her seat on a small round stool, which evidently has been provided for the emergency.

Beyond this verandah, and opening out upon it, are a number of tiny slip rooms, which by and by the missionary will learn to know pretty well as the apartments of one and another of the young creatures who are to become her pupils, but in not one of them will she find a scrap of furniture excepting the charpoie or bed, which is in each. But to-day they all remain in the verandah. The grandmother sits, with the younger women all standing around at the one end, and the missionary contents herself with her stool at the other end. Settled thus, she draws out a picture—Adam and Eve quitting the garden of Eden. Surely it is the best beginning; an explanation in itself of the sorrow that is around,—sorrow, the ripe but bitter fruit of sin.

“Look” says the missionary, holding the picture forward as far as she can, but though the verandah is small, and the younger women even eagerly crane forward to catch a glimpse, it is but little they can see. “Come,” says the lady again as encouragingly as she can, “it is a picture, and I want to tell you about it.” But no one ventures a step nearer. The missionary sighs, but the old grandmother exclaims, “Throw it down on the floor.

Mem Sahib, throw it down, and Jogee shall fetch it to us."

So down on the floor, as far as may be away from herself, the lady throws her picture, for the King supplies just then grace enough not to resent the motive that demands this "keep your distance" command. Jogee, a tiny little bow of six, steps forward to pick it up, and very gracefully lays it at the old Burra Bow's feet; there all the women can at least see it, and from it the lady missionary begins her message.

She tells how God made Adam and Eve holy, good, and pure, and full of grace and beauty; of happy, bright, loving days and life in Eden; of the serpent, with the devil in it, tempting Eve; what sin meant, and how Eve fell; then she told how sorry the great and only God was, how He explained to Adam and Eve the misery they had brought on themselves, and how He would not leave them in their ruin, but would, by and by, send His own Son into the world to save the world; and then she finished up with telling them that Jesus was God's Son, God Himself, her King and her Saviour; and how He it was who had sent her to deliver His message to them, and that that message was that He loved them too, and wished to save them, and desired that they would learn all she could teach them, so that they might read for themselves all the glad tidings He had sent them.

Murmurs of dissent, unbelief, interest, and hope had followed all her story, but now tongues were unloosed. "Mem Sahib, you tell us of your God, but He is nothing to us," exclaims one. "No, indeed," continues the Burra Bow, "nothing to us; our forefathers have fixed our religion, and that is good enough for us; we will stick to it, and be saved!" "And was it not your Queen who sent you, not your King, and how much will she give you if we do learn?" asks another. "Mother, I want to learn, may I?" asks the young man's wife who has been indeed the cause of all this wonderful upstir; for he it was who carried the invitation to the lady missionary, after having endured all sorts of scoffing and abuse and contradiction from the other men of the family; and, of course, as soon as he had gained the old father's consent to the invitation being given, he had lost no time in giving it, nor had he failed to tell his little wife, a girl of sixteen, with already two tiny brown babies to call her mother—sons, happily, both of them—that he should like her to learn whatever the Mem Sahib, who had promised to come, would teach her. She was a timid, shrinking girl, but about the happiest and brightest of the whole group—for was not her husband kind to her? and had she not her two boys?

"Learn! mother of Harish? Ah no, you must not learn. Do you not know that it is a sin to teach a

woman? and if you learn, your husband will die, and you will be a widow, and your sons will be fatherless," urges the sad-voiced Burra Bow. "Oh no, do not say so," says the missionary lady, seeing what a cloud of dismay has covered every face. "All the women in my country learn, and there are not so many widows there as there are here. Let her learn; and some of you other dear women, will you not learn too?"

"She calls us dear women," adds a third in the group, "and my husband said I might learn, so he is not afraid it will make him die; let me learn too, mother," and so pleads one and another. "What would you teach them, Mem Sahib?" asks the old lady, evidently yielding somewhat: "would you teach them wool-work, to make slippers and caps for their lords, as I have heard you are ready to do?" "Yes, I would teach them all that, but also better things besides. I must teach them about my King and my Saviour, and to read His message for themselves; and then I will teach them writing and all sorts of things."

"Oh no, Mem Sahib, you must not—you really must not; our gods would be angry! Your God may like you to read His message, but our gods"—and the unutterable dread made the poor Burra Bow break down altogether, and with passionate sobs and *moans* rock herself to and fro hopelessly.

The sad sight so moved the compassionate heart of the missionary, that forgetting all prudence she rushed forward, and kneeling down took hold of the poor woman's hands, stroked and fondled the poor dazed head, and mingling her tears, sobbed,—“Do not weep, mother, do not weep. Our God loves you too, indeed He does; He died to save you!”

For one sweet moment of relief the Burra Bow yielded; oh, the comfort of being thus treated! “My sister,” she began, and then—back came the horrible remembrance that this was a Christian who was touching her,—“oh, leave me, leave me; how dare you touch me? unclean! polluted one!” and the softened look gave place to unutterable scorn and indignation.

For one throb the English woman's heart nearly burst with indignation. Was this how her pity was to be received and returned? but, “Father, forgive them,” echoed softly in her heart, and she remembered Jesus her King and all He bore; and looking up, and stepping back, she only sweetly smiled, saying, “True, I forgot you did not like a Christian to touch you; forgive me, pray.”

At this critical moment the footstep of the old Babu was heard, and all the younger women, drawing their chuddars right over their faces, fled each one to the recesses of her own chamber. How curiously their hearts palpitated. What would become of the Mem Sahib? What would the Babu say?

What would the Burra Bow do? Should they ever see the English lady again? What a sweet face she had! Would the gods really be so angry if they learned? &c., &c.

These and a thousand other wonderments were mingling themselves in their minds, whilst in the verandah the Babu was saying, "Well, Mem Sahib, have our women behaved themselves; have you had a pleasant visit?" He spoke in English; perhaps he knew what had happened; was it well to tell him boldly, or would it be bad for her chances for the future? would he say she must never come again, or would he be harsh and cruel to the poor women because she had so far forgotten herself as to touch the Burra Bow? These were the questionings of the missionary's heart, but they only took a perplexed second or two, which same time sufficed for a "prayer to the God of heaven," and then the promise was again fulfilled: "In that same hour it shall be given you what ye shall speak." And in a bright calm voice, turning to the poor trembling Burra Bow, the lady replied in Bengali, "Yes, it has been a very pleasant visit, only the Burra Bow's tears made me for a moment forget that you Hindus despise us Christians, and in wiping away the tears I touched my friend." "Well," replied the Babu, also in Bengali, "I suppose that is a pollution *that Gunga* (Ganges water) can wash away. Are

you ready to come away?" "Yes, only I have not arranged which day I shall come again; shall it be this day week, at this same hour?" "As you please, Madam, we are all too honoured by your goodness and attentions." "Be it so then," adds the missionary in a clear distinct voice, hoping all the women would hear; "I will come again this day week and bring more pictures, and a book, and some work, and we will begin in earnest to teach and learn;" and with salaams she withdrew. The Babu very politely handed her to her carriage, and again thanking her, allowed her to go without one word of rebuke.

Have we dwelt too long upon this first visit? perhaps—but it was the first, and so very precious, and must stand as a type for all.

Between this and the next week how many a talk there was of the Mem Sahib. Mohaluckie declared to her husband that half the weariness and all the quarrelling were past, for they had something to think about and talk about besides themselves, and that they had never once had recourse to their stones for a game since the Mem Sahib's visit. He laughed, and told her there would be another change next week, for they would have lessons to attend to instead of discussions; and so it came to pass. Twelve of these young creatures began to learn. And though they were not all equally bright, there was soon a marked change in every one of them.

and not one ever forgot the words of that first visit, nor how the Mem Sahib had wiped away the Burra Bow's tears, and told them that Jesus loved them. Very soon all fear of touch-pollution was past, and they crowded around their beloved teacher, held her hands and even her feet, and vied with each other as to who should love her most and do her most honour.

And the Burra Bow was allowed to go to the Ganges and bathe, but came back with the feeling that it had been but little necessary, that the Mem Sahib's sweet and gracious "forgive me, I forgot you did not like a Christian to touch you," was enough; and the previous words, "Do not weep; our God loves you—indeed He does; He died to save you!" softly re-echoed themselves in the sorrowful heart, till they became its sweet song of praise; and though never able to learn to read, she would sit at the teacher's feet and drink in every word about *her* God until she learned to love Him for herself, and would gently reiterate, "Tell me about Jesus, how He loves us poor Hindu women as well as you English ladies, and how He died to save us all."

In another house things did not go quite so well. "We do not wish to hear any more of Jesus," the pupils would declare, "let us learn to read and work. The Babus say we are not to read your Bible, it will make us all Christians, and that then you will

steal us away and send us to your Queen in England to marry us to her sons! But the Mem Sahib was firm, "Tell your Babus I will not teach you at all if I may not teach you my Holy Book first. I did not come all the way from England to instruct you in reading and work, but to lead you to give up your dreadful idolatry and become Christians if you would. I cannot *make* you Christians, only God's power and grace can do that, but it is a dreadful thing for you thus to turn away from His loving offers of salvation."

"We do not want to go to England," sulked a young bow. "My husband says it is a dreadful place, and that is why you all come here." "Very well, Bindu," laughed the teacher, "be very sure nobody wants *you* in England, not even the Queen."

"I shall not learn to-day at all," replies the sulky one, and away she goes to try to escape the drudgery, which it certainly is, to her, to even learn her alphabet, which yet she has not accomplished, after a good many patient teachings too.

The wistful eyes of a poor young thing who sits apart draws from the teacher the gentle questioning, "What is it, Lakshmi? What ails you to-day? Let us finish your lesson in your own room." And the other young women scatter, having but ill repaid their teacher's care this time.

Seated on the floor in Lakshmi's room, for here

there is no bed, as she is a widow, and must lie on the floor, the teacher continues, "I am sure you are ill to-day, Lakshmi; what is it? Tell me."

"Bindu is angry because I learn my lessons quickest. She says I have no business to learn at all, and that Sarasvati (goddess of learning) cannot really mean to help me or accept my work or puja, because I am a widow, and accursed."

"Never mind, Lakshmi, we know that an idol is nothing at all, and that there is but one God, and Jesus Christ, whom He has sent."

"Only one God! O Mem Sahib, do not say that to me; it is wicked of me to listen. Our shasters say there are millions of gods—333 millions. Oh! how can I please them all?"

"Listen, Lakshmi: there is no need for you to try. *There is but one God*, and He is the God of the fatherless and the widow, and you are both. He loves you and will help you, if only you will believe in Him."

"Mem Sahib, I cannot; if it were true that the great God loved me, He would not have allowed my husband to die. No, no, I am truly accursed and miserable." And the weary head sank in terrible faintness with a sad thud upon the floor.

"Lakshmi, poor child! you are ill. What is the matter? Tell me. May I get you some water?"

"Mem Sahib, no, no! It is my fast-day. I may *not touch it*; and besides"—giving herself a little

miserable rousing shake—"am I not polluted enough? I would not drink water that you had touched!"

Again the indignant thrill. What? even this poor despised one to reject a proffered kindness from a Christian's hand! But, ah no! poor Lakshmi was too wretched to be indignant with: instead, she spoke in soothing tones. "Nay, Lakshmi, I never thought to fetch you the water myself, but only to persuade Bindu or one of the other women to do so for you."

"No, Mem Sahib; no, no. It is my fast-day;* and, parched and thirsty as I am, I may not taste a drop. Oh, they are so cruel, so cruel!"

These were the last words the missionary ever heard from Lakshmi, for before next lesson-day came round, she was one morning found dead in the cowhouse! She knew the horror her people all had about death in their houses, so after taking poison she had crept away thus to die alone. She had learned to read and write, and by her side was found the following letter. When the teacher came they gave it her to read, and the wound left in that teacher's heart was very long in healing, for here there was no hope. The letter ran thus:—

"MOTHER!—I leave thee in sorrow. Forgive all

* A widow has to fast for twenty-four hours once a fortnight, and during that time, as above stated, she is not allowed to take even one drop of water.

my misdoings. Where my mind is there I am going. What is the use of my living? It is not my intention to go astray, and what is the use of my life? The Hindu religion is very bad in giving early marriage. I am going long before my time. I could not ask forgiveness in words, therefore I do so in writing. I was destined to die in this manner. Let no one grieve for me. It is no one's fault. Mother, on account of me no one liked you, but now every one will worship you. I pray God to forgive my sins, and save my soul from going to hell. I who have taken poison am in a bad state of mind. There is no grief greater to any one than that of a Hindu widow. I was only eight years and five months old when I was married; I am only eighteen now. I see no reason for suffering distress of mind any longer. Why has God made me a woman? and why should I suffer so much? On account of shame, which may hereafter befall me, I am giving up my life. I have bought opium through the hands of the little children, one and two pice worth at a time, and had accumulated one rupee and five pice worth, which I have taken. I did not send for more through fear of being detected. I have taken nothing more. I have not known happiness even one day since my marriage, and I am therefore giving up my life. Show this to all my friends." *

* *This is a copy from the original letter.*

Alas! the iron enters the soul. Thousands of Hindu widows are complaining thus.

In an old journal kept during these early years, our missionary finds these extracts, and allows us to use them.

“June 1855.—One of my visits to-day took me to Babu Dabee’s house. A month ago their youngest son escaped; he had been for many weeks kept in strict imprisonment in his own room; indeed, it is said that he had been also heavily drugged to render him unconscious and so quite incapable of any effort at escape, and all this lest he should get away and be baptized. He confessed Christ to his father and friends, but they were wild with rage, and seemed ready to do anything short of putting the poor fellow to death to prevent ‘this disgrace to their family.’

“This Jadu is a noble young fellow, only nineteen now, has been a student for years in the Missionary College, and has been gradually taught by the Holy Spirit to see the terribleness of Hinduism, and to long to escape from it; and in the long struggle he has also learned the better lesson, to see himself a sinner and Christ a true Saviour, and at last *his* Saviour. This was *joy*, and this he could not keep to himself; he told our missionaries, and then confessed his faith to his father and refused to do puja. This was twelve months ago before he was of age.

Eighteen is the legal coming of age of a Hindu man—and so he waited patiently, hoping in the meanwhile to gain his father's consent to his baptism. He says he did really *hope*, but how he could we know not, for his life ever since has been one of hardest trial and most cruel persecution; but until they took his reason he could pray; and this, no doubt, helped him to bear all their other cruel treatment.

“He is married, of course; all Hindus are married as a part of their religion. I believe fifteen is the proper marriageable age for a man, and for a girl eight years, according to their shasters. Jadu's little wife has been my pupil, with about ten others in that same house, her aunts and sisters-in-law. She has been Chota Bow, being the youngest wife, but there are also a handful of little girls under nine, some married, but awaiting their removal to their husbands' houses, and some not married; these we have formed into a separate class, and one of our Normal School pupils has been teaching them regularly every day from seven till nine A.M., though I can only go to the elder ones once a week. Now, I suppose, all this will come to an end, for this morning vengeance fell upon me, and I was told I must not come any more. I saw poor little Goonesh—Jadu's wife—looking very sadly at me, and so I said as quietly as I could, ‘Why must I not come?’

what is the matter?' A torrent of explanation followed. 'Do you not know what Jadu has done? but, of course, you do. We only heard this morning. The Babu told us it was your fault, and you should not come again. O Mem Sahib, why did you help him; we all want you more than Jadu, and now he is baptized, he is dead to us, and Goonesh is a widow!'

"'Baptized?' I inquired. Oh, what a throb my heart gave; was this indeed true? what joy, and yet what sorrow! joy that he was safe within the fold, and had thus bravely separated himself from his old heathen life and had come boldly out on the Lord's side; and yet very sorrowful for my poor pupils, and especially for Goonesh, and that I must leave them there in their trouble. 'Baptized?' I inquired again, 'are you sure? how did you learn the news, and where is he?'

"'Do you not really know?' they asked, 'he is at Azimgurh, and he wrote to the Babu, his father, and says he was baptized last week, and asks for Goonesh and the baby to be sent to him!' A quick 'teek,' a peculiar noise they make in their mouths, from all the others warned the speaker that she was going too far, and my hasty glance across at Goonesh met hers of despairing entreaty which I read thus—'Do not forsake me, help me if you can;' and I did not even dare to telegraph a response, lest we should be observed.

“‘What else did he say?’ I inquired anxiously, hoping they might think me more absorbed about Jadu than about Goonesh.

“‘The Babu told us nothing more, except that he signed himself—your son, Jadu Nath Dabee, Christian; and the Babu said that was a lie, he was not his son if he were a Christian, and that we were to account him dead. He was very angry about Goonesh, and said she was to perform the widow’s puja, and have her hair cut off. And, O Mem Sahib, he finished up with being wrath about you, and saying you were never, never to come again.’ And a loud sorrowful wail broke from all the dear women.

“Yes, it was truly a great sorrow to us all, and I did not feel able to decide what was best to say or do. I tried to comfort them, told them I would try to see the Babu, and prevail on him still to let me visit them, but without his permission of course I could not come. Then wishing them all good-bye I turned to go, but Goonesh, up to that moment still and silent, rushed with a loud cry and threw herself, baby and all, into my arms. Very gently I secured the tiny bit of paper I felt was in her hand, laid her back upon the floor, and bade the others take care of her; more I dared not do lest I should awaken suspicion; and promising to try to see the Babu at once, I hurried down the zenana stairs into the courtyard. How I

longed to go straight home and read in safety what Goonesh had written, but I felt sure it would be best to see the Babu at once; he would surely expect me not to go without a word, and though I dreaded his anger, it seemed better for everybody's sake to brave it now than put it off, and he would at least give me credit for my courage. So I looked round for a servant to send with my salaams, and request for permission to see the Babu; but just at the moment the old man himself stepped forward. I was shocked to see him so completely altered by his grief; doubtless it is very true and real grief to him and to all Jadu's heathen relations and friends. It is, as they say, 'a great disgrace to their family,' cutting them off from caste privileges until they have been restored by the aid of penance and Brahmins, which latter will take care to make it cost the poor old man as much as ever they can get out of him; and whatever was the love for his boy in the father's heart it must all be crushed or rooted out, for he may never see him more. The poor mother is even more to be pitied, but her I have not seen, probably she is hidden away with her sorrow, perhaps trying to appease the gods by some personal torture and sacrifice.

"The old man walked straight up to me, saying, 'Mem Sahib, you have received my message from the ladies, doubtless.'

“‘Yes, Babu,’ I replied, ‘they tell me I must not come again; but’——

“‘No buts, Madam, you Christians have bewitched and stolen my son. I must take care no more mischief is done in my house by you.’

“‘Well, Babu, then I must submit; but your little girls are all getting on well with Miss Hay; must I tell her too that her little school must be broken up?’

“‘Yes, yes; how can I have Christians about when you have wrought me such ill.’

“‘Babu, I have wrought you no ill, and I am truly sorry for you in your grief, though I rejoice to hear of Jadu’s escape, and his brave confession of his new Lord.’

“‘Ah! you well say new Lord, his father’s gods, forsooth, are not good enough for him! he must have a new Lord, one who will let him eat beef!’

“‘Babu, Babu, you know that is not so. Jadu would never have left you for such unworthy motives; he is gone because when he found he had sin in his heart, your gods and your lords, though they are so many, were every one of them and all put together quite powerless to help him, they could not give him a clean heart and a right spirit, but Jesus has. And now he has fulfilled the command about baptism, he will come back to you if you will let him, and be a better son to you than ever.’

“‘Come back to me! of what do you speak, Mem

Sahib? Come back to me! has he not wrought ill enough to our house. Come back to me! he never shall; indeed he cannot, for he is dead.'

"'Dead!' I exclaimed, forgetting for the moment that they speak thus of any who become Christians, and fearing that some one had really put the young fellow to death. 'Dead! Ah! no, I see what you mean; that he is dead to you.'

"'Yes, that is what I mean; but do you tell me you have need to ask me any question about the wretched boy? do you not know all about him?'

"'I know nothing, Babu, but what the Bows have told me; they say he is at Azimgurh and is baptized, and that I am not to come again; but I hope you will reconsider that question and let me come all the same.'

"'No, no indeed, I shall not. So, with thanks for your kindness to my women, I must bid you farewell.' I raised my hand for salaam, when the old man continued in a hurried voice, 'Unless you do hear something of the wretched boy, then come, Mem Sahib, and let me know.' Oh, how glad I was of this one token of relenting in the father's heart, but I hurried away without a word, for promise I could not give; perhaps I might hear something of Jadu which it would be well to keep all to ourselves.

"When safely on the road, half-way towards home, Goonesh's letter was unfolded and read:—

“‘BELOVED MEM,—I love my husband, and will be a Christian, if he likes, so that I may get back to him; tell him this, and please ask him to fetch me. I am poor broken-hearted GOONESH.’

“I have been round to the Missionary Compound and told Mr. Bishop all my story; he advises me to wait till we have from the missionaries in the north some reliable information. He thinks it possible that Jadu is not at Azimgurh at all, and that the old Babu let this name be mentioned to put me off my guard and discover if I knew where Jadu was; but I did not know, so escaped this trap, if it were indeed really laid for me. But my poor Goonesh! I can do nothing but pray for you at present!”

We turn over the leaves of the old journal, and just twelve months after this date, *i.e.*, August 1856, we find this entry—

“Goonesh is safe with Jadu! Thanks be to God, who only doeth wonders! Has He not wonderfully, graciously answered our prayers. I must write down all the details for my own good!

“About a month after Jadu’s baptism which, after all, was accomplished at Lahore, not at Azimgurh, I got the following letter:—

“‘HONOURED MEM SAHIB,—You have heard through

Mr. Bishop and my honoured padri of Lahore, that I am now a Christian, having received faith and grace of our Lord Jesus Christ to forsake all to follow Him, and being permitted to receive baptism in His name, after confessing my faith before a congregation of believers in Lahore. Truly His goodness to my soul passeth understanding; but my heart is breaking to receive news of my little wife Goonesh. I hear from my friend Babu Gopal, that my father has told his friends that I am dead, and has done penance and paid the Brahmins to make atonement for my disgrace, and to reinstate them all in caste privileges again. I am very sorry for my poor old father and mother; I know in their hearts they are grieving for me, but I can only pray for them to our great and loving Lord, the Lord Jesus Christ. I wish they knew what joy and peace He can give. But my friend Babu Gopal cannot tell me anything about my wife, nor can I ask him to do so, or to try to find out, — that would be contrary to all our customs, and dangerous for him and for her; but I am pining to hear of her. Mem Sahib, you can find out, and you can tell me; I lay my want at your honoured feet. A letter to this address will find me. Do you still teach in my mother's zenana? I cannot think it; I fear they would be sure to say the ladies must not learn when I became a Christian, but you can find out for me and tell me something of my little wife. Pardon the trouble I am giving

you ; and please, find some way of sending me news about Goonesh.—Your obedient servant,

‘JADU, Christian.’

“Oh, what tears of joy I shed over this letter! I laid it before the Lord and thanked Him for keeping Jadu faithful and true, then I went to Mr. Bishop to show it him and ask his advice. Write at once, he counselled, and send Goonesh’s scrap written that first terrible day, and then try to see her and get permission to visit the house again regularly.

“The letter I wrote and posted, then I ordered my carriage and went at once to Babu Dabee’s. As I expected, his first question was—‘Have you heard from my son?’ And though I greatly feared the consequences, I had to say, ‘Yes, Babu, I have heard from him, but no particulars, except what you already know, that he was baptized at Lahore. He further says he is sorry that his action has caused you and his mother grief, but that he wishes you could know the joy and peace he has found.’

“‘Joy and peace! Well, he has left but little of that behind him, that’s true enough; miserable boy, to talk to us of joy and peace!’

“‘He did not talk to you, Babu, he only expressed his wish that you might enjoy what he had found.’

“‘Ah, well, we do not enjoy it, and that you may tell him; the women even curse his memory because he has caused you to withdraw your visits.’

“‘*Babu, may I go back to them, may I see them*

to-day, may I come again regularly and teach them?’

“‘Ah no, Mem Sahib, that cannot be, I fear,’ said the poor old man in a much softened tone. ‘The mother is ill, dying of a broken heart, and Goonesh is ill with nursing her, and the others are sad and quarrelsome because you do not come to them.’

“‘Babu, it seems as if I should be the best physician, do let me go and try to do them all good.’

“‘Will you really try, Mem Sahib?’

“‘Indeed I will.’

“‘Then go,’ and to my utter astonishment the old man walked away. I tried the zenana door, but it was locked, so I fled across the courtyard calling ‘Babu,’ fearing he would disappear into one of the men’s apartments before I could overtake him, but when he heard my voice he turned and said, ‘This way, Mem Sahib, I am taking you to see the Burra Bow;’ and with this he pushed open the door of one of the lower rooms opening out of the courtyard and ushered me in. So dark it was that at first I could see nothing; presently, after blinking the outside sunshine from my eyes, I found it was the cowhouse; I think my nose told me this almost before my eyes, however I could see the cows, and just then Goonesh rushed up and seized my hands.

“‘Mem Sahib! Mem Sahib!’ was all her cry, but

she held me tight. I turned to thank the Babu, but he was gone. Then I could give all my attention to Goonesh. So thin and emaciated the poor girl was, no wonder the Babu said she was ill.

“‘What is the matter, Goonesh, why are you here?’ I inquired. In a hushed gentle voice she answered,

“‘Mem Sahib, the Burra Bow is ill, and they have brought her down here to die.’

“‘Here, Goonesh! Where? I do not see her, and what a place to bring a dying woman into!’

“‘Yes, it is wretched, but you know it is a sacred place, because the cows are here, and it will not be very much polluted though she should die in it; but come and see her.’

“‘Yes, Goonesh,’ I said, ‘but wait one moment; I have had a letter from your husband, he wants to know all about you, and I have sent your letter. Did I do right?’

“‘Yes, but come.’

“Was this to be all? I saw Goonesh could not bear any more, so followed her quietly into the furthest, darkest corner of the room, where, lying on nothing but straw, I found the old Burra Bow. Even in that dim light I could see how ill she looked, and the wide open eyes and restless movements were very sad and distressing. Of course I knew I must not touch her, what was I to do?—*surely never* was any one more powerless to help.

I remembered with shame my boast to the Babu—‘I should be the best physician: do let me go and try,’ and here I was by the dying woman’s side and might not even touch her! I could only cry to the Great Physician and ask Him to help us all. Kneeling down by the poor woman I said—

“‘Burra Bow, mother, you are very ill, may I pray?’ The words, perhaps the voice, called back a memory into the weakened, wandering brain, and very feebly she turned and gazed at me. ‘Speak, Goonesh,’ I entreated, ‘tell her that Jesus, the Good Physician, can make her well—ask her if I may pray to Him for her.’

“‘Mem Sahib—Jadu—Good Physician,’ she murmured, gasped, and died.

“A fearful scream from Goonesh told all within hearing, and a rush into the cowhouse seemed to indicate the arrival of the whole household; but indeed to this day I know not who it was that came. I felt the Babu’s hand laid tightly on my arm, and heard his voice saying, ‘Come, and bring Goonesh;’ and then together we were in the courtyard and hurried across to the zenana stairs, and the door closed behind us.

“There poor Goonesh collapsed, sank at my feet, and I thought had fainted. I had some eau-de-cologne in my pocket, and with this and my handkerchief I bathed her forehead. I never thought of not touching her then. Presently the poor girl revived, and

we sat and talked a little while upon the stairs. Then she, remembering that we might be caught by some one she should not see, dragged herself wearily up the stairs into her own old room, and of course I followed. How it was that not one of the other bows came I know not, but there Goonesh and I were absolutely alone for a full hour. She told me how the poor Burra Bow had been sent to the Ganges, and had sat day after day in the water, with it up to her waist, and with the burning sun pouring down on her unprotected head for nine days after the purifications about her son's baptism had been gone through, and that when she came back she looked so ill, and had such bad fever that they sent her down to the cowhouse, and now she was dead. And poor Goonesh wept bitterly.

"All this time we heard the fearful wailing of the hired mourners and the noise and confusion down below, and I wondered that I was allowed to remain. Presently Goonesh asked me to tell her about her husband, and I read his letter to her, and she brightened up as if the thought of his love comforted her; but still she wept, and reiterated—

"‘Mem Sahib, take me to him, you could; please, take me to him.’

"‘No, Goonesh,’ I said, ‘that I cannot do; but I will write and tell him all about to-day, and perhaps he will devise some means of getting you to himself.

I am sure he will ask God to teach him how to do this, and how you are both to act; but shall we also ask God to help him and give him wisdom, and make you both patient till you can see what God would have you do?’

“‘Yes, please, yes,’ and she glided down on to her knees, and still held and pressed my hand, whilst in that heathen home and with such sorrow and perplexity all around, I asked the great Comforter to come and heal and guide these oppressed and afflicted ones.

“Then I asked, ‘But, Goonesh, where is your baby girl?’

“‘Ah, I know not; but I will go and see. I had to leave her here with Thakoo, for of course I could not take her down to the cowhouse when I went to nurse the mother.’ And she darted away, returning almost immediately with the baby and Thakoo, all the other bows flocking in as soon as they heard the Mem Sahib was come back. I could only assure them, in return for all their excited loving talk, that I would come again whenever the Babu would let me, and I thought that would be as soon as their mourning was over.

“Three or four days after I wrote and asked the Babu if I might come, and when? And he sent back a polite little note expressing much grief at all the late occurrences, and saying that a month hence,

when all the mourning was over, the ladies would be glad to see me, and he would deem it an honour if, after all that had happened, I would resume my visits. Here was hope again, and I could but thank God and take courage.

“By and by another letter from Jadu arrived, full of gratitude about Goonesh, full of sorrow about his mother. Poor fellow ! he evidently clutched at any hope regarding her. ‘It was only one word,’ he wrote, ‘but, Mem Sahib, was it not a prayer ? You say it was her last word, “The good Physician.” Surely He would hear and save her. Ah, my mother is with Him, not in our fearful purgatories, not transmigrating ! O Mem Sahib, will you not help me to believe that this is the case ?’ Evidently the poor fellow had yet much to learn, and all the horrors of the old life belief and superstitions had not quite passed away. I wrote and comforted him as well as I could. But Goonesh and the other women were not so easily comforted ; they still firmly believed all the horrors they had been taught, and that the soul had passed away into some other body, whether for punishment or reward they could not tell, but they firmly believed, and so hope was a very small item in their thought of the departed one. They could only moan, ‘It was her fate, it was her fate !’

“The eldest aunt became the Burra Bow, and things *soon* glided back into the old routine ; if, indeed,

that can be called routine which consists in doing next to nothing.

“‘What do you do to wile away the time?’ I asked one day.

“‘Do, Mem Sahib? Not much. Some one or two of us cook the men’s food, and then for the rest of the time we plait our hair, nurse the children, and eat and sleep, and eat again.’

“‘Oh, but we learn our lessons now!’ said one bright little bow, but at this I could only laugh, for of all my houses the pupils here were the idlest and most do-nothings. Perhaps it was that they had had so many interruptions.

“One morning Goonesh handed me her book with a letter inside, and I could only quietly continue the lesson I was explaining, and then put Goonesh’s book and its contents into my satchel all together. No one noticed this, but Goonesh looked happy and trustful when I bid her good-bye; and on reaching home I found, as I expected, that it was a letter from her husband. How he had contrived to get it to her I never quite made out; but it was a proposal that he should come and fetch her on a certain night, that she should be all ready with their little one at sundown, that his friend Gopal had promised to help them by having a carriage at hand, that he would come and ask to see his father, and then claim boldly for her to be given to him. If his father saw him,

and yielded to his request, all would be well. He would rather have it thus than any other way, but if he would not, she being already hidden in one of the 'go-downs' near to the outer door, would hear him call aloud, 'Goonesh, Goonesh!' and must slip out immediately, for Gopal would be there to receive and protect her and drive away with her to the shelter of his home. 'I shall make a rush for the zenana door,' he added, 'which will attract attention that way, and will give you plenty of time to get away before I even try to make good my own escape.'

"Her own little note which she had entrusted also to my care, evidently quite sure I should send it, was simply the quiet assurance, 'I will be ready.' Of course it went, and a fortnight after, the whole scene was successfully carried through, and Goonesh was free!

"The friend Gopal returned next day to the Babu, to explain that he felt he was really acting a friend's part by all, in thus aiding the escape, that Jadu could have legally claimed divorce and married another wife if he had refused to give up Goonesh, and that he had learned from Jadu that she had expressed her willingness to join him. The poor old Babu heard it all with sorrow and perplexity. 'Our religion and our caste is being ruined,' he complained, 'but then it is bad, bad, that is true; *what are we to do?*'

"I feared it would finally close this house, and perhaps even others to me, and so it has; the news soon spread that the zenana Mem had 'kidnapped' Goonesh and taken her away to her Christian husband; and out of my thirty houses which I had at that time, I have only five left. Poor Babu Dabee sent me word not to come again, and I could not be surprised, though I was sorely grieved. It is the Master's work, and He gave it me to do, and He will take care that it is not really hindered by these untoward events. The imperishable seed of the Word has been sown, and 'I will trust and not be afraid.'"

We turn leaf after leaf of the same old journal, too impatient to read all that is between, till we find this entry.

"March 1858.—At last I have news again of Jadu and Goonesh. They have suffered much during the terrible Mutiny which is now, thank God, over; they were at Allahabad, indeed it was to a new home at Allahabad that Jadu took Goonesh when he had rescued her from his father's house. He had Government employ there, and before the Mutiny broke out a little son was given to them, but yet Goonesh was not a Christian; indeed she seems to have resisted with terrible pertinacity every persuasion of her husband's to draw nearer to Jesus. She set up a sort of little puja house in their new home.

help, to turn the tide, and drive the mutineers from the fort, and so Allahabad was saved.

“But what of the Moulvie’s prisoners and the Native Christians? The Moulvie had fled with the other mutineers, leaving them still locked up in the temple dungeon. Amongst them faith and patience had grown bright. Goonesh had crept to her husband’s side and had comforted him. Ah, what other comfort could have been so bright, so real!

“‘Jadu, I *am* a Christian now; I love Jesus, and will help you to pray to Him to save us.’

“‘Perhaps He may not save us, poor Goonesh; what then?’ sighed Jadu.

“‘Never let go the faith!’ rang clear and loud from a young English officer’s voice, who had been thrown, wounded and dying, into this dungeon with the rest. He was not delirious, but he had but partially understood poor Jadu’s sigh.

“‘No, God helping us, we will never let go the faith,’ responded one or two of the fellow-prisoners.

“‘Never let go the faith, never let go the faith!’ reiterated poor young Cheek, as Goonesh murmured, ‘He is dying, poor young sahib; but if we all have to die here, I will die with you, Jadu, and Jesus will take us all to His bright heaven. I am sorry I have resisted all His love so long, but I have asked Him to forgive me, and He has. I cannot be baptized now, but we can pray—pray, Jadu, that we may all

soon be with Him, away from this wicked world. "I believe in God the Father; I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son," softly repeated Goonesh, having often heard these words from Jadu when he had been trying to teach her what Christianity really meant.

"'Never let go the faith!' repeated the dying voice, and then was hushed for ever.*

"By and by the British soldiers found and released the captives, and some weeks afterwards, when things were quieter and hope was beginning to dawn, Goonesh told her faith to the English padre and was baptized.

"They wrote to ask me to be godmother to their baby boy, and I have been to Allahabad for this purpose, and am now back again at my work, with a heart full of thanksgiving for the life of holy joy and peace which I found my dear old pupil leading. She is very quiet and retired still, spending all her time in her house and with her children, and filling all vacant hours with the study of God's Word. But she walks down to the Native church on Sundays by her husband's side, and she always remains quietly, with her work, in her husband's little room in their home when his Christian friends come in to read the Scriptures and talk and pray with him.

"And once she quietly remarked, 'Is not this different, Mem Sahib, to our sad life in the zenanas ?

* A fact.

I should like to tell you some day how infinitely more sad that is than you in the very least imagine. What dark cruelties and abominable idolatry, and evil practices, and terrible wickednesses go on behind the purdah of which you kind and good Mem Sahibs know nothing. But I cannot tell you now, I must not stir the old memories yet; my own personal sins and iniquities I have, I believe, laid all on Jesus, and He has forgiven and washed them away; but I must not disturb the peace which, He has so graciously given by detailing scenes of the past.

“‘No, Goonesh,’ I said, ‘you are right; never return even in thought, to those old sins, only pray that He who has saved you will be gracious to your poor zenana sisters, and lead them also into the light.’

“‘He came to set the captives free,’ she murmured. ‘But, O Mem Sahib, I am glad that my little Bidhu will never need to know any of those horrors!’”

One more extract from this journal is all we must give. It runs thus:—

“June 1859.—I am going back to England—must go, for my health has failed, and so completely failed that I can do no more work here for my Master and my King, at least not at present, perhaps a little home nursing and some English bracing will enable me. God grant it may, for I know not how to give it all up.

“*My dear zenana pupils! more now than ever, and*

daily increasing. I have ninety-three actual learners ; besides many, many listeners whenever the best part of the lesson hour comes round, namely, the Bible lesson. The women from all the neighbouring houses, to which I really cannot go to teach because of want of time, crowd in and sit at my feet, and stand thick upon the house-top and in the verandah to hear the Mem Sahib's 'message from the King.' They have all learned to think of the lesson so, and I am glad. May His word find entrance into all their hearts."

Our missionary did recover and return, and in this year, 1881, still labours and waits and prays for the salvation of Indian sisters. And as the year grows, the work grows, not only numerically as regards the houses opened and the women taught, but in its effect and depth.

"There is such a difference perceptible in the very look of the dear women after they have been under instruction for some time," writes one missionary, "and so it should be. Their intellect comes out in their faces, and they are really clever, and the old dull listless lives give place to happy bright industry, and consequently there is a great deal less quarrelling than formerly.

"I went into a zenana the other evening, just simply for a call on my way home, quite unexpectedly, and what a different scene met my eyes. Two years ago, when first asked to visit these ladies, I found fifteen

women with all their noisy unclothed children, boys and girls of all ages, up to seven, swarming in the verandah and women's apartments; not one of whom could read, and the dirt and noise were intolerable.

"But they really were desiring to be taught, and yearning after a better sort of life, and it was wonderful how soon the chaotic scenes changed into order and decency. First of all they guessed I did not like sitting on the dirty floor, and so, even on my second visit a chair was in readiness for the Mem Sahib; it was in a somewhat shaky condition, and had evidently been rescued for my use from the discarded furniture of the men's apartments, still it spoke of thoughtfulness for me, and I was glad. Then I need not shock you with descriptions of their undress attire, suffice it to say, this too soon changed, and clean Saris, and a little more of them showed an evident desire to please the Mem Sahib. By and by most of the children got at least a loin cloth; and I thought myself well repaid for my forbearance when the Burra Bow asked me to give them a pattern for a kurtu (jacket), and teach them how to make it; and in a little while to find that each pupil had made one for herself and wore it.

"They cleaned up, too, the dirt and untidiness, made the fowls live down in the courtyard and out-houses, and presently coaxed from their husbands both tables and chairs.

“From time to time I have given them little prizes and presents of nicknacks, &c., as recognitions of their improvement and as proofs of my pleasure. There is a family work-box ; two little shelves for their books ; a couple of illuminations on the walls, our favourite one, John iii. 16, and ‘Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.’ Also a bright little picture I got from home of an English family at tea on a lawn ; the handsome house in the background, the large trees, green grass, and bright flowers are very attractive looking ; then the tea equipage and the lady at her urn, with gentlemen all round, evidently waiting on her, and the bairnies, astonish these Native ladies greatly. In the forefront of the picture are some children at play with a dog, a boy lies on the grass holding the great shaggy neck, whilst a little girl is slipping on a garland of flowers, which other little girls, sitting in a group beyond, have evidently helped to prepare. All is so English and so unlike anything they have ever seen, that it is quite a lesson to them, and they often inquire, ‘Is that really the way you live at home?’

“So you see even their surroundings have improved ; but I must tell you what I saw the other evening. Seated comfortably in a low wicker chair in a shady corner of the verandah was the Burra Bow. She is a dear bright woman, not more than forty, though looking much older, and with already seventeen

grandchildren ! though some of these, her daughters' children, are not here with her of course. She had spectacles on, and was reading aloud. As I came forward I caught the words, ' And it came to pass that on one of these days, as He taught the people in the temple and preached the gospel, the chief priests and the scribes came upon Him,' &c., and I knew they were ' searching the Scriptures ' for themselves. On the charpoie (low bedstead) sat most of the rest of the women sewing—two of them had wool-work, one was nursing her baby, and the little Chota Bow was keeping the tinies engaged with a quiet game of stones, which they arrange in some mysterious way on the ground, not very unlike our ' solitaire.' They all looked so bright, and so happy, and so content, it did my heart good. And why should not all India be gladdened by such possible pictures?"

Another missionary down in one of the southern stations writes:—"To-day I went to see Swami Gnathun Pillay, who has brought home his new little wife—his first wife died only four months ago, and now he has another to fill her place. Had it been he who had died, leaving his wife a widow, she must have mourned for him *always* as long as she lived, but the husbands soon forget and soon console themselves with another. Swami is a man twenty-five or twenty-six years of age, and with three children already, the eldest a

boy two months older than the new little step-mother, who is just nine. Poor Swami! he really looked quite ashamed when he introduced her to me. He fetched her into the room in which I was talking to him, but she was so completely wrapped up in her chuddar that I could only see what a trembling wee little mite stood behind him. He said, 'She will speak to you when I am gone, and I want you to teach her. Unfortunately she is very young.'

"I replied, 'I am glad you wish her to be taught, but how can you hope or expect that such a child will be able to take care of your children? Why did you not marry a proper wife?' He replied frankly enough. Our conversation was in English of course, and so, unhurtful to the poor little timid, shrinking child, dignified by this unsuitable name of step-mother: 'You see, madam, that could not be, I could not have found an unmarried woman of a "proper age," and widows we may not marry; both things are contrary to our customs. No, I must be satisfied with my child-wife till she grows, and meanwhile my widowed sister will take care of them all.' Then he retired, and I took the poor little trembling wife into my arms and tried to comfort her. Presently she smiled and said in Tamil: 'He is very kind, he has not beaten me yet.' 'No,' I said, willing to encourage

her; 'no, he will never beat you, I am sure, if you will try to be obedient and loving.' 'But the aunt beats me often, she says I am but one child more;' which was true enough, to be sure, so I could only smile and say, 'Well, let us to our lessons now; where is your little step-daughter who is to learn with you? and are we to have our lessons in this room?' for I perceived it was the husband's room, and so I supposed not likely to be free to the wife and children.

"However, she replied, 'Yes, Mem, he says we may always have our lessons here, for you will be with us to take care of us,' which at least showed that he was willing to reform wherever he could, and that he did not mean to draw the tyrannies of his caste any tighter than he could help. I was glad for the child's sake, but, oh! what incongruities and difficulties beset these young men in their endeavours after progress!"

"One day," writes another missionary, "I went to my pupils in zenana No. 16, and found my favourite in great distress. Her husband had been convicted of some evil deed by Government, she did not seem to know what, and had fled she did not know whither. I fancied he might have been imprisoned, but found out afterwards that this was not the case, but that he was in Lucknow and living with one of his many other wives. It seems he is a Kulin Brahmin, and may have just as many

wives as he pleases, and that in this case it has pleased him to have a good many—thirty or more—with one or another of whom he finds refuge as the necessity of his crimes may dictate. He lives entirely, as indeed do most of these Kulin Brahmins, upon his wives' fathers, for the poor girls are only used for these emergencies, they are never taken away even to his mother's zenana. I told Shoshi what I had heard when next I saw her, and she said he had taken all her jewels, and probably she should never see him again, adding, 'If I can live honestly I will.' But the hunted look in the poor creature's face made me afraid as well as sorry.

"A little while after this I found they had all gone on pilgrimage, and when they came back, the party was minus the old aunt.

"'Where is your aunt?' I inquired.

"'Oh! we left her at Benares with holy mother Gunga,' they very coolly replied.

"'What do you mean?' I asked in a horror.

"'O, Mem Sahib, she was old and ill, and we had gone all that long way on purpose to take her to the Ganges, and it would have been cruel to bring her back. You know we do not let anybody die in our houses, and she would be sure to go straight to heaven, at least for a while, if she died with holy Ganges mud in her mouth.'

"Alas! had they left her there to die? I did

not dare inquire, for though I have heard of such things, I felt my indignation would be too personal if I knew these men and women had been cruel enough thus to forsake their own relative in her extremity. I am glad Benares is not my station, for they say that many such terrible deeds are committed there, and that one cannot help knowing about some of them; and yet even there good work for our dear Lord is being carried on and souls won into His kingdom.

“One woman asked me yesterday, ‘Have you any sons, Mem Sahib?’ ‘No,’ I replied, ‘you know I have not.’ ‘Ah, that is a pity, for no woman can go to heaven at all unless she has a son to gain her admittance there, he can work out her liberation for her, but no one else can.’

“‘Our gods are terrible, terrible,’ moaned a poor sick child; ‘they took me to Kalis’ temple, and I am dying of the fright. I see her bloody tongue, and her wicked face, and cruel hands, and necklace of skulls, and I cannot help screaming, and then they beat me!’”

“I went to a Bengali house,” writes another zenana missionary, “and heard a great deal of wailing and moaning going on. I found my pupil seated on the stones, with her hair hanging down, her face crimson from weeping, and altogether presenting a most heart-rending picture of

grief. Round her were several women screaming at the top of their voices; and by her side was seated a relation nursing a little boy of two years old, who looked very ill. As soon as my pupil saw me, she threw herself into my arms, and sobbed out: 'O Mem Sahib! make my child well; see him now, my king, my all—what shall I do, what shall I do?' Then she knocked her head on the stones, and went into a convulsion of grief.

"Suddenly a young man entered with a thick, small sheet in his hand, which he spread on the ground. As soon as the poor mother saw him she sprang up, seized her child from the other woman's arms, and called out, 'You shall not take him.' The young man went up to her and said, 'Give me the child.' Then I tried to make my voice heard in the tumult, but it was impossible. All I could do was to delay proceedings for a few minutes. The little child was undoubtedly dying—very nearly dead—but its body was quite warm, and it seemed to me that it still had a little breath left in it. I said, 'Do not, please do not disturb the child yet.' But the man went up to the mother, forcibly snatched the child from her, laid it down on the sheet, took off all its jewels, then took it up and rushed out of the house with it to bury it. The poor mother's grief was terrible to see, and the screaming of the women sad to hear. 1

stayed a little to see if I could give any comfort; but finding I could not be heard, I went into the next room and talked a little to the child's father, and then came away. When I repassed the house two hours after, the weeping and wailing was still going on.

"It appears the poor little child had a cold, and it was not attended to; soon bronchitis set in, and they sent for me. The message was never delivered to me, and I knew nothing of the child's illness until I went in and saw what I have now written. How shocked I was! I had heard before that it was the custom to *bury* children, and that very quickly, but I had not thought of such haste as this. *Perhaps* that little child might have been saved. How much more earnest it will make me in prayer, that my pupils may become God's children, and that no more such sights may be seen amongst them. How different from the death of a Christian mother's child, and how different the poor mother's feelings! One feels so helpless to comfort a heathen."

Another—"My next house was that of the late Tasildar, to see his dear widow. Twice before I have gone in and taken them by surprise, and have read and talked with her, her hand in mine, trying to comfort her; but this time her old mother and sister were there, and they would not let me go to

her, as she was fasting. I saw her lying there in the inner room on the floor, covered face and all. I spoke, but she did not answer. I asked the old woman why she did not give her food. 'Oh,' she said, 'people will speak disparagingly of her if she does not fast.' 'But could you not give her some food privately?' I said. 'Oh no,' replied her sister; 'her fasting will help her husband to get to heaven!' Truly Satan's slaves are very cruel and very cruelly treated by him whom they serve. If one had not the sweet relief of prayer it would be impossible to bear all one sees of sadness and sorrow."

Thank God, many—yes, many—amongst these women have had faith and grace imparted, not only to cast away their idolatry, but boldly to forsake all and follow Christ. Already there is a Converts' Home needed and full in Calcutta, and another at Amritsar, where these stricken and oppressed ones may find a refuge and work, when thrust away from the homes which will no longer protect a Christian outcast.

The ranks, too, of the native Christian teachers and Bible women are being constantly recruited by these faithful and true servants of Jesus. One society alone, that of the Church of England Zenana Missionary Society, has upwards of two hundred such on its staff of paid assistants, the history of whom, when it comes to be written, will

testify that it is through much tribulation that they have been guided and helped into the kingdom of heaven. And there is scarcely one zenana teacher's heart that has not been gladdened by some such open seals to her ministry; and who shall number the hidden, timid, secret ones who have the joy and peace that Jadu and Goonesh spoke of, though not their courage to confess their faith as they did.

"Joy, joy!" writes one, "Bashonto is safe with us, a baptized and rejoicing believer."

"Three dear women came forward for baptism last Easter Sunday, and are quietly walking in the light."

"Necho's husband beat her and burnt her books last week, but has let her come to us to-day for baptism. We know she is trusting only in Jesus, but we shall wait awhile before asking her to face all the congregation, which, to a purdahed woman, brought up in all the seclusion of the zenana, is in itself a trial. She spends much of her time in quiet Bible study and prayer, and we are sure all needed courage will be given."

"They have stormed our house to-day to try to get Punio from us, but she gently and meekly, but very bravely, told her husband and her father, 'I am a Christian. I must be baptized, then I will come back to you a faithful and true wife if you will have me.' But this was not what they wanted, and at last, after taking from her all her jewels, and

her husband declaring she was no longer his wife but that he would marry another, they have left her. She is like a wearied child, but patient, and sweet, and full of faith. She will (*D.V.*) be baptized on Sunday next."

"Faithful unto death, our dear Maryal went home to her Father's house yesterday. She has been a Christian fifteen years. Her husband died twelve years ago, and ever since she has spent her time in Biblewoman's work, maintaining her children on the very small salary we have been able to give her. She very visibly grew in grace, and closed a life of quiet devotion by a most happy, peaceful death. 'Jesus is with me; He has redeemed me and loved me, and, oh! I am so glad to go to Him.'"

And so the work progresses. These crystallised bits must stand as a type of all, and of the nature of the mission undertaken, and then it will be enough to add that "opportunities" and "openings" are ever increasing, and that so rapidly that we can no longer think of the English lady missionary standing outside a locked zenana door, but may rather truthfully point to "open doors" everywhere in such vast numbers that every resource and effort is overstrained.

And, further, it is a fact that the women of India send forth to-day from Calcutta to Bombay, and from Peshawur to Trevandrum, yea, from every part

of the vast continent, their imploring cry, "Come over and help *us*." And whilst Sir R. Temple tells us of seventy thousand girls at school in British India, we can add for zenana pupils (only approximately of course) some ten thousand or twelve thousand women, with the assurance that these might be indefinitely multiplied were there but an adequate supply of missionaries and means. But these the Church at home can alone supply.

We are not writing an appeal but a history; still may we not be allowed to point out the inevitable corollary of the facts, and urge upon every English Christian to bestir themselves to this great call from the great Head of the Church, and "Come to the help of the Lord, the help of the Lord against the mighty."


"Large, England, is the debt
Thou owest to heathendom;
To India most of all, where Providence,
Giving thee thy dominion there in trust,
Upholds its baseless strength."

—SOUTHEY.

CHAPTER V.

MISSIONARIES FROM ENGLAND.

“ Ye servants of God, your Master proclaim,
And publish abroad His wonderful Name ;
The Name all-victorious of Jesus extol,
His kingdom is glorious and rules over all.”

“  OTHER, will you let me go to India? I would like to be a missionary.”

“ My child, Mary! what do you mean?
How can you mean it? Leave me!”

And two full hearts looked out of tearful eyes with keenest searchings to read each other's mind. Lips were dumb enough, but the hearts spoke; and the mother clasped the drooping girl, wondering keenly what the end would be.

Scene—A pleasant, cheerful drawing-room in a quiet English vicarage, where mother and eldest daughter, after a long, fully occupied day, were just left alone; the younger children having gone to bed. This was the time for conference and confidential chat, so pleasant to busy labourers, who, beyond all others, enjoy the sympathy and relaxa-

tion that such hours only can give. Mr. Leighton was in his study still, so Mary had her mother quite to herself this evening; but her opening sentence seemed to have put a stop to conversation for the present. She had knelt down by her mother's side before venturing to make it, and now lay with her head on the shoulder to which it had been drawn, when the gaze of dumb entreaty had shown the mother that the question was one that must be answered, and that in solemn earnest.

The next words came from the mother's lips. "Mary, darling, when did this thought become a purposed wish?"

"I hardly know, dearest mother, except that ever since Uncle John's return from Africa three years ago, I have heard his words, 'Mary, why not be a missionary?' over and over again, and I have thought perhaps it was God's voice asking me if I would go."

"But India? what made you think of India?"

"At our Working Parties lately, we have had letters read from some ladies in Calcutta, telling such sorrowful details of the miseries and ignorance of the women all over India, that my heart has yearned to comfort them. Mother, it is such fearful idolatry in that country; and the women, rich and poor alike, are so cruelly used, it would make your heart sore to the core, if I could tell you but half of what we have been hearing about them."

"I know some of their sorrows, my child, and I know that where Satan is worshipped, and Jesus is unknown, there women will always be in evil case, and my heart does pity them truly."

"Yesterday Mr. Bonar came to close our meeting; he is, you know, a missionary from India just home on furlough, and he took the thought of God knowing their sorrows and His great pity for them. He read the verses, 'I know their sorrows, and I am come down to deliver them.' Then he told us what some lady in India had told him of what she had seen; for, as he said, *no man* can get to help, or even to see any of those poor sorrow-stricken ones; the ladies are all shut up in their zenanas. And he smiled such a wonderfully pitying smile as he said, 'How would you like to be shut up in one dreary room, never to see the face of any man but your own husband, and he perhaps not over kind, or at the very best, very indifferent about you altogether, only thinking of you as one of his "chattels," and having married you by his father's command, when you were only eight years old?' Somebody laughed at this, but Mr. Bonar looked hurt and said, 'Ah! dear young friend, it is no laughing matter to India's poor little girls, I can assure you. Imagine these poor children brought, one after another, at so tender an age from their own parents, and married to men or boys they have never seen before, and as the

custom is, brought as inmates of his mother's or grandmother's zenana.

“Necessarily these Hindu families are very different to ours. There, a man does not leave his father and his mother to cleave unto his wife, but he takes his little wife home to his mother, to be cared for or despised, or cruelly used, as the case may be. Indeed, until these child marriages are prohibited instead of commanded, I see not how else it can be, for these children could not, as a matter of course, set up housekeeping for themselves.

“A Hindu household must, at the very best of times, be a curious mixture of conglomeration and isolation. Let me describe what, as a man, I have seen. Plenty of large handsome houses, both in Calcutta and the other large towns, and in the country too. The outside looks all right enough, and in the outer verandahs you can see, in leisure hours, early morning and evening, plenty of gentlemen lounging and smoking; there I have often joined them, and we have talked of everything in heaven and earth, religion and science, life and books, &c., &c.; but on one subject there is complete and absolute silence. The domestic side of life, of their women folk, mothers, wives, and children, no word is ever spoken. And so far as I or any outsider *could tell*, such a phase of life did not exist for these

men. Often there would be a white-headed, fine-looking turbaned old man, the head of the establishment, to him a good deal of respectful homage is generally paid, and paid gracefully and well; then his brothers, three or four, as the case may be, not much, but still somewhat younger than himself; he may have his three or four sons, all married men with families, and then his brothers are probably equally well off; then come the younger generation, probably they, too, for the most part, boys above fifteen, and then by the laws of their religion they also are all married. What, then, must be the life hidden away in the inner recesses of that square house—when I say square house, I mean a house built round a square—the outside is, as you see, pleasant enough to look upon, but away in the inside are the women's apartments and the women's life, and I cannot tell you what is there. In such a verandah some thirty men would not more than represent the average families of the ordinary Hindu household, and so, as each of these men are married, there must be as many women behind the scenes as there are men to the fore.'

"Mother, is it not a curious custom?"

"Indeed it is, and I should think a very unhappy one too, and also one likely to cause the growth of great wrongs and much misery."

"Mr. Bonar said he imagined it would be difficult

enough for even thirty *Christian* women, brought together without regard to character, age, or disposition, to live amicably and pleasantly; but then, add the thought of living thus, not in freedom to come and go as you will, and with books and work and multiplied duties to vary the days; but caged together in one dull inside square, all equally ignorant and idle.

"At first I did not think of why they must needs be so idle, but as Mr. Bonar says, 'they can have nothing whatever to do.' His lady-informant told him that one morning she asked some ladies she was visiting, what they did to wile away the time, 'Nothing, Mem Sahib,' was their reply. 'We have nothing to do. We sit here till we are tired, and then we sit there!' Now, mother mine, could anything be more horrible. Happily they have begun to want to learn; the young husbands who have been ever so well educated lately, since our English Government thought it well to offer them education like our English boys, have begun to think it would be better to have their wives educated too, and so now there is some chance of getting into these zenanas, and helping them a little bit into a higher and better kind of life."

"Yes," said Mrs. Leighton, "I see a little way into the dark cloud now, and it does seem as if *these zenana* missions were just the means God

would own and bless for the salvation of India's women."

"Mr. Bonar said that too, mother. He said it was the 'opportunity' for us to carry in the light of truth, and that it would be cruel to offer our sisters stones instead of bread, which mere knowledge without Christ would be, or to make them long for freedom without the restraints which faith in Jesus and sanctification of the Spirit would impart."

"Well, darling, I see enough to make me comprehend your wish to go; but we must consider well before we deem ourselves worthy to be personally called to such high office in our Saviour's army."

"Mother, I am not worthy—I know that quite well—but if He calls me must I not follow, and will He not fit and use me too?"

Again there was a long silence, the mother trying to stifle the anguish of the thought, "Why should it be, Mary? Why should I be called to part with my child for those far-off women of whom I know so little?" "Not for them only but for Me," came the still small voice—

"I gave My life for thee,
What hast thou given for Me?"

Presently the father's step was heard crossing the hall for the drawing-room, but mother and daughter both felt they had borne enough for this one evening,

and so Mary quietly took her seat and her work together, whilst Mrs. Leighton said—

“Thank you, darling; we will say nothing more about it just yet.”

It was well the two understood each other so perfectly.

Some days elapsed, and though Mr. and Mrs. Leighton had talked and prayed much about this matter, they had not yet agreed to part with their child. It seemed to them like giving her up for life—something, I suppose, as Hannah felt about Samuel: she might, indeed, hope to see him now and again, but not to have him as her own eldest son in the sweet circle of domestic life, but far away ministering to the Lord. They knew, indeed, as Hannah did, that it was a glorious, happy service, and that it would be a high honour to have one of their children engaged in it, but they were not prepared to give Mary, and there was a little of the spirit of “Anything but this, Lord! Why ask so much of us?” But again and again came the voice—

“I gave My life for thee,
What hast thou given for Me?”

At last one morning Mr. Leighton announced, “I find Mr. Bonar, Mary’s friend, is coming as deputation to our Church Missionary meeting. I will invite him here, and then we can have a talk.” He

did not say a talk about what, but all the same it was understood, and mother and Mary had each to ponder it in their hearts during the morning's work till they could find fitting occasion to speak.

Mary's duties took her first to their own school-room for a lesson with her sisters, next to the parish school to take a class there, and after that to the bedside of a sick woman, whose case was a peculiarly sad one and needed every thoughtful care. Whilst ministering there to a mind as sorely diseased as the body, her mother came in. Mary was softly singing, "There is a fountain filled with blood," and when she came to the words, "Lord, I believe," the sick woman stopped her with—

"Do you, Miss Mary? Do you really yourself believe all that about Jesus saving us?"

Mary was unprepared for this attack. She certainly had not expected to be called to "confess" before her mother and this dying unbeliever, prompted, as Mary at once realised, by Satan himself, so for one brief moment she paused, whilst the prayer flew from her heart, "Holy Spirit, help me, for Jesus' sake!" Then, with a very moved face and voice, she bent a little nearer to the dying woman, and sang on—

"Lord, I believe Thou hast prepared,
Unworthy though I be,
For me a blood-bought, free reward,
A golden harp for me."

"And what will you do with the golden harp, Miss Mary?" questioned the poor unbeliever.

"We shall fall down before the Lamb, and sing a new song, saying, 'Thou art worthy, for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation, and hast made us unto our God kings and priests, and we shall reign on the earth.'"

"But, Miss Mary, does it not say in that very book you are saying that out of, how nothing and nobody shall go to that place with the golden harps that is wicked?"

And again Mary quoted, "There shall in nowise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination or maketh a lie, but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life."

"Then it is no use to talk to me. I must go to the other place, for I have made and told, ah! and lived, many a lie. Don't you see, Miss Mary, there is no hope for me?"

Again the broken, gentle voice repeated, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

"But how? How, Miss Mary? Ah, I have been more wicked than you can tell; there is no hope for me."

"The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin," sounded with a little ring of hopefulness from the quivering lips, and then she slipped

down on to her knees, drawing her mother down too. A quiet, solemn pause ensued, broken at last by a sob from the bed, and then by Mrs. Leighton's voice in audible pleadings, intercession for pardon, and peace for Jesus' sake.

Very quietly they rose, slipped downstairs, and started homewards. "Is not such work missionary work, and necessary as well as happy work, Mary?" at last asked Mrs. Leighton.

"Yes, mother, it is all that; but if He calls me to other work, must I not go?"

"I suppose you must;" but the tears which stole down the mother's cheek were not quite submissive ones yet.

Almost heart-broken Mary fondled her mother's hand, clung to her arm, and at last got out, "Mamma, I could never go without your fullest consent."

"No, that's just it," exclaimed the mother almost passionately; "it is asking me to bind my sacrifice to the altar with my own hands, and with my own heartstrings for the cords."

Poor Mary was appalled. "O mother! if you feel so," was all the broken cry she could utter; but it was well for her to have had this gleam of her mother's agony. She could never forget that not hers was the offering. If her mother let her go this would be her gift—the gift of her first-born child into the Lord's treasury.

They did not speak again till they reached home, indeed not even then, for on the door-step they kissed, and separated each to the quiet of their own rooms. We think the same story went up to the all-compassionate Ears from either heart, only one was the mother's view of the case, and the other the child's; but the Great Listener knew how to fit them both together, and answer each with comfort and help.

At the dinner-table was Mr. Bonar. Half the dinner was over before a word was said directly on this point. All felt pretty sure it must come, but just waited each one for Mr. Bonar to speak; so for the most part the talk was of missionary enterprise generally, of the joyous happy service, of the glory of the vocation; then just a word or two to the little ones of the sights and sounds of India. He told them of the hot sunshine, the gorgeous colouring, the tempestuous rains, the big animals, and then about the little girls, actual curiosities in themselves, from being so very tiny and small; and then, half merrily, he looked across at Mary, saying, "I almost thought the other evening you were going to offer to be one of us, and go to teach these same little girls. There are plenty of them, I do assure you, and do you not think it is worth considering?"

Mary's half-frightened look down the table to her mother drew Mr. Bonar's attention also to her, and *the mute appeal of that pale, sorrowful face, was*

almost more than even he could bear, revealing at once the real difficulty which clothed the question here. But the Master surely had His message for even such a case, and the words came very gently from Mr. Bonar's lips, "Because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, in blessing I will bless *thee*." "He spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all." "Is there no joy, dear madam, in having such a very good, very best gift to ask Him to accept?"

And then conversation for the servants' sake flowed on in ordinary channels. But that evening's missionary meeting was curiously toned by the thought awakened by this little peep behind the home curtain or purdah. Mr. Bonar rang out a clear note for "the best of Masters." His estimate of donations; the Queen of Sheba's big gifts to Solomon, which certainly gave her pleasure in the bestowal, and which were accepted by the great king, and returned too in greater gifts to herself. Of the Widow's Mite, not so great a contrast as at first sight appeared, for she gave "all her living." Of the Costly Alabaster Box, and of the other Mary's tears, all accepted by the "King of kings" in His great humility.

"Suppose He had refused them," said Mr. Bonar, "can you imagine the heartbreak it would have been to those women? But suppose they had not offered them? Beloved, may we not reverently

pause and think of something of His disappointment and sorrow who gave Himself for us ?”

Very much followed from both Mr. Bonar and others of the pleasures and profits of the Service, and of its wonderful results ; but very little of all this was heard by Mrs. Leighton, she was laying her treasure down at His feet, and communing with her Lord in the full joy of realising that He accepted it and was pleased.

On their return home, Mr. Leighton gently asked, “ Will you two dear ones come for a little while into my Study, I think we must discuss and decide this momentous question without more delay. I am not going to part with my Mary lightly, of that you may both be sure ; but are we not taking something from the worthiness of our gift by this reluctance ? ”

“ Father, father, I will not even ask to go. I see now how it grieves you both ; it cannot be right to try my mother thus, I will not go.”

But that mother was strongest now ; very gently she kissed the girl’s forehead and said, “ He gave Himself for us,” and the father, clasping the weeping and much loved girl in his arms, quieted the distressed sobs with “ Hush, my child, hush ! We will none of us turn rebels on this point if we can help it. Let us pray, and God, our gracious God, whom we all know as ‘ Our Father,’ will surely guide us to do His will.” And then in solemn holy entreaty, which we

may not follow, the burden was laid down ; direction and grace and strength were sought, and each was comforted.

By and by in the conversation Mr. Leighton said, "I believe these people do want missionaries very badly, Mary. Strangely enough I had a letter from a missionary friend* this morning, and he tells me a good deal ; but I will read it to you—

"There is no branch of missionary labour at the present time which demands more earnest attention than that of the women of Bengal. For years education has been leavening the minds of the men of the country, and the educated mind of young Bengal has passed through many stages, until at last there is a tendency towards education as an enlightening agency. Many have ceased to acknowledge the truth of the Hindu Shastras ; have learned by experience the hollowness of mere natural religion, when peace of mind is the object sought for, and have now become ardent admirers of Messrs. Newman, Parker, and Co. ; talk of intuition and philosophy, quote the Essays and Reviews with rejoicing satisfaction, and console themselves that they are ahead of the ordinary minds of Europe ! They are, I believe, some of them, in earnest, and naturally seek for some sort of society at home. They have wives, but they want

* A verbatim copy of a letter from the Rev. S. Hasell, C.M.S., to a clergyman in England

associates, helpmeets ; and they are just awakening to the importance of education for women.

“Many have opened their zenana doors, have expressed themselves willing to receive instructors ; but suitable ones are not without very great difficulty to be had. . . .

“When at the time of the Crimean War, our soldiers were suffering, the spirit of England’s sympathy was stirred, and ladies of means, influence, and education were found willing—indeed anxious—with that noble Miss Nightingale at their head, to brave the dangers of climate and travel, in order that they might nurse suffering humanity. It was a crisis in England’s history, and she rose to it.

“A few years ago it was next to impossible to get a glimpse of the ladies of the zenanas in Calcutta ; now, had we the agency, one half or more of the houses of the native gentry would be thrown open to them. But that agency must be suitable ; they must be ladies, educated, holy, martyr-spirits ; women like Miss Nightingale, who, for the luxury of doing good, will endure hardness willingly ; women who will see in the zenanas of India a moral Crimea ; women who see in their Indian sisters worthy objects of loving care, and who will come, bringing their lives in their hands, and be willing to visit the families to which they may gain access, not as governesses, but as friends, actuated by love to

souls; constrained by the love of Christ to do what they can to open out to the benighted wife, or sister, or mother, a sphere of real enjoyment—that of being the helpmeets and associates of their husbands or brothers; and not, as too many of them are now, their slaves, or the victims of ignorance and sin.

“‘We do not want governesses with strict notions of school discipline, but good, holy, earnest, practical women, who will be ready to teach in a friendly way, and influence, by day-by-day intercourse, the wayward or the ignorant.

“‘There are, I believe, many ladies of wealth in England who have zeal and love enough to brave the danger of the undertaking and come to Calcutta, if they only knew they would find a sphere; I believe it only needs to be powerfully urged to find those who would come. The climate is not worse than that of the Crimea, the work not nearly so fatiguing as that of the Scutari hospitals, the necessity as real, the number of sufferers greater, their cry for help as loud and as urgent. Where, then, is the difficulty? Is there no Miss Nightingale, and her body of willing, holy co-labourers, ready with heart and hand to enter upon the work?

“‘If such could be found, with means, with hearts warm, and with ordinary prudence and intelligence, they might give, without cost, to all who would invite them to visit. The rule now is to make all

pay, but under existing circumstances I would teach every woman, willing to learn, to distinguish between things that differ; and I would do it in faith and hope. Go on from step to step, and leave the "grace of God, which bringeth salvation," to do the real work. Wait and plead for His blessing. Enable them to read His holy Word, which is the light to the path and the lamp to the feet of women as well as men. Enable them to understand, by practical proof, how much the Gospel has done for Europe's daughters that they come freely, willingly, at their own charges, to tell of the constraining power of a Saviour's love. Who can tell? Some such one might train up a Eunice or a Monica, who hereafter might nurture and train a Timothy or Augustine.

"I should like to see England roused to a sense of the importance of the openings for education in zenanas. All I know in Calcutta who have work in zenanas are already overworked. Missionaries' wives have their hands more than full of other duties; they cannot enter into the zenana-work as it ought to be done. Spare half-hours' will not suffice to enlighten a nation. Only think that the population of Bengal alone is larger than that of France, and that Calcutta influence is felt to its extreme bounds.

"The work before the Society is second to nothing

in the history of Missions. We want women from England to begin it, and then, under the Divine blessing upon means prayerfully and earnestly applied, we may look for great results.'

"And 'Have you no daughter ready to give us ? comes with added power to-day, my child, and we must not grudge to the Lord even the very best of our flock."

And thus it was that one and another were "called" from their quiet homes in England, as messengers to speed over land and sea with the gospel of salvation to proclaim to these *waiting* millions.

Twenty years have elapsed, and the effort has never lacked the manifest blessing of God. His Hand has overcome obstacles, apparently the most unsurmountable, and the light has streamed into many a dark zenana home, and into many a darker zenana heart, until one and another have gladdened their missionary's by the exclamation, "Well, we are birds in a cage still, but you have taught us to sing."

Truly we can re-echo the words of another saintly one now gone to his rest—"Your mission to the women is *the Hope of India*."

But we must not exaggerate our gains; there is yet very much land to be possessed, indeed every

forward step has revealed a hundred others which ought to be taken, and we can only say we have by God's blessing begun well; may He keep His Church steadfast to the end, until through this and other agencies she has won India for her Lord, and has returned this jewel of the East committed to her care to His Royal Diadem.

Not very long ago a Hindu lady, pupil of one of the Church of England Zenana Missionary Society's Missionaries, had, with a group of other listeners, been drinking in the explanation of the Way, "God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life," when she suddenly exclaimed—

"Do you believe it, Mem Sahib, do you believe it?"

"Yes, Mohini, of course I believe it. It is God's own message to us all; I am reading it to you from His Word."

"Ah, I know; but, Mem Sahib, do you believe He gave His Son to die for *us* miserable Hindu women as well as for you English ladies—do you believe *that*, and do your people at home believe it."

"Mohini, yes; we all believe it—it is God's Glad Tidings to us all, to you and to us alike—yes, we all believe it."

"*Then why, oh! why did you not come sooner,*

and bring more with you, to tell all of us this good news?" sobbed poor Mohini.

And we! how shall we answer her? There are *millions* of her sisters still, who have not even once heard the faintest echo of the message. "How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach except they be sent?"

POSTSCRIPT.

An Indian Missionary, asked to write a text in a lady's Birthday Text Book, wrote "*Talitha Cumi.*"

What was the parable in his mind? We know not. But might it not have been of disciples of the Lord of Life here at home, "Not dead, but sleeping," whom He needed to carry to those "other sheep" of His "dead in trespasses and sins" His life-giving message—

"I say unto thee, Arise."

"TALITHA CUMI."



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